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"The Last Days of Illusion": *Glasnost* in *Moscow News*

by

Esther Maria Van Nes

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO
MY FRIENDS IN BELARUS'
&
MY MOM

Oblonsky subscribed to and read a liberal newspaper, not extremist, but the one people went by. In spite of his having no particular interest in science, or art, or politics, he was firmly guided in all these subjects by the views that most people and the newspaper held; he only changed them whenever most people did, or rather, he did not change them - they imperceptibly changed within him of their own accord.

[Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*]

ABSTRACT

"'The Last Days of Illusion': *Glasnost* in *Moscow News*" endeavours to explore the impact which the policy of *glasnost* had on the Soviet press - particularly on the foreign language weekly *Moscow News*. This work chronicles the transformation of *Moscow News* from a loyal propaganda paper firmly controlled by the Soviet authorities into a critical and eventually subversive force in Soviet society. It details MN's coverage of political and economic reform, foreign affairs, cultural rebirth, historical revisionism, negative phenomena (such as the Chernobyl nuclear accident) and nationalism, and explores the newspaper's impact on the disintegration of the Soviet state.

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It is frightening to think of how long it would have taken to finish this thesis without the backing and encouragement of my family and friends. I would like to thank them all - starting with my orthopedist, Dr. W. Rigal, who made a bad break even more of a trial but, at least, forced me to realize my potential.

Secondly, I need to thank my family, particularly my Dad and Gilbert, for their patience and largesse. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my friends for their understanding and support - a special thanks to Pam, Blayne, and the Robinsons for watching over me.

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I have woven for them a great shroud
Out of the poor words I overheard them speak.

I remember them always and everywhere,
And if they shut my tormented mouth,

Through which a hundred million of my people cry,
Let them remember me also....

from Anna Akhmatova's Requiem
(translation by D.M. Thomas)

INTRODUCTION:
THE SOVIET PRESS IN THE GORBACHEV ERA

In Soviet history, the years between 1985 and 1991 are generally regarded as ones of upheaval and radical transformation culminating in the collapse of the USSR. The imperceptible change of opinion of which Tolstoy wrote in *Anna Karenina* would probably not be considered the most obvious description of the developments in Soviet society associated with Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in the 1980s. However, despite their rather revolutionary end, the Gorbachev reforms began with quite conservative aims and unraveled in a complex and often unexpected manner which entailed a remarkable 'change of opinion' on the part of the Soviet people - a change of opinion which ultimately included the questioning of the very foundations and institutions of the Soviet state. It would be simplistic and misleading to suggest that all of the Soviet public followed the same course - certainly many individuals had challenged the legitimacy of Soviet power long before Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms allowed the open expression of such views and many more would staunchly reject any such criticisms of the regime even long after the state itself had ceased to exist. Nonetheless, it is indisputable that a reform process which began in 1985 as an attempt to revitalize the stagnating economy, 'imperceptibly' grew into a revolution which would sweep away the very foundations of the Soviet state. The role of the media, in general, and the liberal newspaper, in particular, in this transformation of Soviet society has been acknowledged by a multitude of Western analysts. Ironically, however, few have

attempted any comprehensive analyses of how the media participated in and was affected by the political liberalization of the Soviet Union in the eighties.

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985 following the death of Konstantin Chernenko. The accession of Gorbachev into the authoritative position of General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party is generally regarded as a highly significant turning point in contemporary Soviet politics marking the end of the conservative Brezhnev period and ushering in the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. The relatively short administrations of Yuri Andropov (1982-1984) and Chernenko (1984-1985) were not devoid of efforts at reform, but neither constituted an abrupt break from the past as did the Gorbachev era. It was almost immediately evident that the new leader was gripped by a desire to reform and reinvigorate Soviet society. His primary aim, undoubtedly, was to revitalize a stagnating Soviet economy - the myriad of attempts to do so were referred to as *perestroika* or 'restructuring.' Gorbachev's reforms were not, however, limited to the economic sphere - the new leader soon realized that any significant change in the economy of the country would have to be accompanied by some form of political change. Lasting economic reform would require an honest and realistic appraisal of existing problems, thus, the policy of *glasnost* or 'openness' was introduced.[1] It also soon became apparent that since the envisioned economic change required greater individual accountability and a reduction of the bureaucracy, a certain degree of

[1] It should also be noted that Gorbachev's foreign policy was also subject to reform due largely to a similar economic imperative, however this will be explored in a later chapter.

democratization was needed.[2] The task of restructuring the political and economic life of the USSR was not a straightforward one: it was necessary to define the problems, find their causes and then find workable solutions. Attempts at reforming the economy proved particularly arduous, and while by 1989 a genuine transformation had occurred in the political and cultural realms, the economy remained intransigently troubled. Gorbachev's goals in 1986 had been to rescue the economy and in so doing to buttress the power and prestige of the CPSU and the Soviet regime; by 1989 it was evident that his reforms were accomplishing neither. By 1990, it had become apparent, inescapable, that the reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev had escalated into a revolution which threatened the very existence of the Soviet state. By December 1991, following the thwarted August coup attempt by CPSU hard-liners, it was a fait accompli; the USSR had crumbled - signed away unceremoniously by the leaders of the three Slavic republics in a farmhouse in Byelorussia.[3] The institutions of Soviet power had been transformed, and most had been stripped of all legitimacy. In the West, the great majority of the population watched these events unfold through the perspective of the media. *Time*'s designation of Gorbachev as Man-of-the-Year and CNN's images of Boris Yeltsin atop a tank in Moscow molded the West's perception of the '*glasnost* era.' Inside the USSR, another media struggled to cover the story as well - a story where, paradoxically, the media themselves were often 'front-page news.'

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[2] Although Gorbachev spoke of the further "development of democracy" as early as March 1985, serious consideration of democratization only began in late 1986. Stephen White, Gorbachev and After (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.28-29.

[3] The basic chronology of this work is based on the USSR Facts and Figures Annual, Vols. 10-17 (1986-1992).

Numerous questions surround the issue of the mass media's role in modern society, but although the role played by the media in political and social change in the West has often come under scrutiny, the possibility that the Soviet media could emerge as an independent and crucial actor in the evolution of the USSR was simply inconceivable in the years before Gorbachev took power. In the West, it was commonly assumed that the Soviet press was a propaganda machine, regulated by censorship, aimed at controlling the information to which the Soviet people would have access. It was regarded simply as a mouthpiece of the Communist Party and the Soviet state apparatus which could only influence its readership in the manner prescribed to it by these bodies. Prior to Gorbachev's leadership most Western authors regarded the Soviet press purely as one of the "basic instruments of rule in the Soviet system."[4] Its purpose was to maintain ascendancy through indoctrination. This negative perspective of the Soviet media was greatly influenced by the prevailing images of the Cold War. In the Cold War perception of the Soviet Union as a totalitarian state, the control of information (exemplified but not confined to the censorship of the press) was a cornerstone of Communist power. The belief that "coercion - combined with an elaborate system of censorship, secrecy and propaganda" was at the basis of the persistence of Soviet power largely defined the Western perception of the Soviet press and precluded any thorough attempts to examine the role of propaganda [5] In Persuasion and Soviet Politics, David

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[4] Marianna T. Choldin and Maurice Friedberg eds. The Red Pencil: Artists, Scholars and Censors in the USSR (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 1.

[5] David Wedgewood Benn, Persuasion and Soviet Politics (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc., 1989) p. 2.

Wedgewood Benn argued that the observation that Soviet/CPSU power was not based solely on force and that there was relatively little internal opposition to the system, coupled with the assumption that the system was inherently evil, led some Western analysts to the over-hasty conclusion that Soviet power was based on propaganda and indoctrination (and consequently that the press was purely a medium through which to carry out this sinister plot).[6] Such a bias led analysts to underestimate the complexity of the relationship between the Soviet press and Soviet society as a whole. Admittedly, the Soviet press, like virtually all other institutions in the USSR, was an organ of Party and government. However, it would be a gross oversimplification to thus conclude that it was wholly a product of propaganda without character.

Despite its rather sullied reputation, however, the media was also one of the few sources to which Western analysts of Soviet affairs had access. As a result, Sovietologists, particularly during the Brezhnev years, endeavoured to "read between the lines" of the Soviet press in order to form some sort of vision of the "inner workings" of the USSR. During these years, something as seemingly insignificant as a discrepancy between *Pravda's* reprint of an official speech and *Izvestia's* was taken as proof of conflict within the Kremlin.[7] In many respects, the conclusion that the Soviet press was a direct, precise reflection of the Party and State was a necessary one for

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[6] Benn, Persuasion, pp. 216-217.

[7] Milita Dzirklas, Thane Gustafson, and A. Ross Johnson. The Media and Intra-Elite Communication in the USSR (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1982), preface, v. Fortunately, discussing the relative merits of such an approach is beyond the scope of the present work. It is suffice to say that the present endeavor is less about reading between the lines than it is about watching the lines metamorphosing both as a direct result of Party policy initiatives and through some internal momentum. There are few/no attempts to search for Aesopian language, although it must be admitted that there is some speculation about motivation that is linked to examples of "convenient coincidence" and there is a belief both in sly and clever remarks which mean more than they might literally say.

Sovietologists to make, since the Soviet media was often their only source of information about the Soviet Union.[8]

The merits of such an approach are, of course, debatable, nevertheless prior to Gorbachev's relaxation of control over the press it is undeniable that the Party and State had a heavy influence. Not only were the organs of the media owned by Party and State bodies, but this 'establishment' also controlled the education of journalists, the appointment of editors, the supply of equipment and paper, and the methods of distribution; subscription to certain papers and journals was required of even rank-and-file members of the CPSU; wages were paid out of official coffers (there were no others); and, finally, the last word on what could be printed or broadcast was had by the censors at *Glavlit*. *Glavlit* (The chief administrator for literary and publishing affairs which became the first censorship agency of the Bolsheviks in 1922.)[9] maintained a list of forbidden topics which included, up until 1988, even reference to its own existence[10] In 1982 a RAND corporation study reputed this censor's Index, the *Perechen'*, to consist of approximately 300-1000 pages and to be found in the safes of every chief editor.[11] Apparently, the list forbid the publication of information about "crimes, drugs, accidents, natural disasters... security intelligence,... arms sales abroad, problems in the armed forces,... special payment and education of athletes",[12] and, of course the "names of persons not to be mentioned."[13] Whether or not such an

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[8] Angus Roxburgh, Pravda: Inside The Soviet News Machine (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1987), p.10. RAND, p.1.

[9] Mark W. Hopkins, Mass Media in The Soviet Union (New York: Western Publishing Company, 1970) p.78.

[10] Benn, From *Glasnost* to Freedom of Speech (London: Pinter Publishing, 1992), pp 8-9.

[11] RAND, p.38.

[12] Ellen Mickiewicz, Media and the Russian Public (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1981) p.54.

[13] RAND, p.38.

index existed in physical forms, these 'taboo' topics were conspicuously absent from the pages of Soviet papers before 1985.

It would be unwise, however, to suggest that only the sway of *Glavlit* kept certain issues off the printed page. Other factors must be considered as well. Thomas Remington's 1985 article, "Politics and Professionalism in Soviet Journalism," examined several of the 'material' factors which shaped the Soviet press. He confronted, for example, the issue of the Central press' predominance over the regional media (i.e., why a great deal of the content of regional papers is reprinted verbatim from *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and TASS). Whereas this phenomenon was normally attributed to the monolithic control of information on the USSR, Remington argued that material and time constraints must also be acknowledged: "overworked and under pressure the *raion* journalist turns to official sources for ideas and information and his writing style becomes standardized and cliché ridden."[14] But perhaps more importantly the differences between Western 'news' content and that which appeared in Soviet papers must be considered in light of the Soviet perceptions of the role of the press in society.

It is impossible to engage in a meaningful discussion of the Soviet press without acknowledging this radically different conception of what the press should strive to accomplish. In the West, assumptions about the nature of the press are intricately tangled up in assumptions about democracy. More specifically, the ideas of

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[14] Thomas F. Remington, "Politics and Professionalism in Soviet Journalism" in Slavic Review, Vol.44, No.3 (1985) p.494. It might also be noted that Western regional papers exhibit a similar characteristic reprinting much of their material from the three major wire services UPI, AP and Reuters.

freedom of the press, freedom of expression and freedom of information are seen as some of the basic cornerstones of a democratic system. In what has been termed the Libertarian theory, the press is seen as an essential counterbalance to the power of the government; a 'fourth estate' charged with being the watch dog of the citizenry; and a "free market place of ideas" providing enough "fairly presented" information to allow the public to make informed decisions.[15] In these terms, the Soviet press lined up "diametrically opposite": "Our press tries to contribute to the search for truth; the Soviet press tries to convey pre-established Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist truth." Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's "theories" of the press provide a simple separation point between the Western and the Soviet Communist media. The former is charged with providing a multitude of opinions, the latter as "servant of the state" presents only the official line.[16] In reality, of course, the distinction is less clear. The Western press is restricted not only by the confines of capitalist economic necessity (i.e., printing what people will pay for), but also by norms which make some topics taboo for public discussion. Fifty years ago, for example, the discussion of homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle, for example, was no more publishable in the West than in the USSR. McCarthyism in the United States demonstrated that even a slight affinity to socialist ideas was largely outside of acceptable debate. At present, debate rages about the "propriety" of rap lyrics, the spread of "hate" literature and the accessibility of "pornography" on the internet. To enter into a serious discussion of these issues within this work is obviously impossible. These examples are cited only to

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[15] Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, Four Theories of the Press (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963), p.4.

[16] Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, pp.5-6.

demonstrate that the Western press also has limitations imposed upon it by the society in which it operates.

The Soviet press operated under a different set of ideals than did the Western press; an entirely different history had shaped it and an entirely different paradigm dictated what was newsworthy and what was not. In the Soviet Union, the press was undoubtedly controlled and restricted by the ruling elite. The role of the media as a servant or 'propagandist' for the Party was a logical extension of the basic tenets underlying Soviet rule - that the Party and the Soviets were ruling in the interest of the people. In the West the press was seen as an ally of the people. In Soviet ideology, however, the Party and the Soviets were equated with the people, they were the true representatives of the people and as such could openly proclaim their rightful control and use of the media.[17] Western ideals which equated 'journalistic objectivity' with presenting all sides of a story were obsolete since the views of the Party were "considered to represent the correct and truthful perception of reality."[18] The limits of acceptable debate were defined by the Party line. Not surprisingly, much of the 'ideology' which dictated the role of the press in Soviet society had its basis in Lenin's writings. Many Western authors, such as Mark W. Hopkins and Angus Roxburgh, have written extensively on the legacy of Lenin's thought as well as the influence of successive leaders (Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev) on the Soviet media. For the purposes of this study it is sufficient to note that an essentially Leninist vision of the press persisted. It was to serve not merely as a disseminator of information but as a

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[17] Hopkins, pp.19-21. Roxburgh, pp.50-51.
[18] He Zhou, "Changes in the Soviet concept of news" in Gazette Vol.42 (1998) p.195.

tool for organizing and mobilizing the masses.[19] The persistence of this conception of the press was attested to in Roxburgh's study of *Pravda* (1987) which quotes the editor-in-chief of the paper, V. Afanasyev: "We inform the masses of the decisions of the Party and government, propagandize these decisions, mobilize and organize the Soviet people to carry them out, accumulate and mold public opinion...."[20] In the overarching Communist philosophy of the press as a voice of the Party, of the Party as the true representative of the masses, propaganda becomes a duty - one of the primary functions of the media. One might, at this point, debate the 'sincerity' of such an ideology - arguing, perhaps, that it was simply an excuse for oppression. However, it must be noted that regardless of the opportunism displayed by the people who ran the USSR, ideology was ultimately the fundamental justification for Soviet power.

The concept of 'propaganda', which in the West carries many negative connotations, was, for Soviet newsmen "not a dirty word."[21] The media's job was thus to help the Party in its role as the vanguard of the masses - to work as an advocate of the decisions made by those in power. Over the decades the press had been enlisted in this capacity to forward numerous Party and government objectives as well as to

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[19] Mickiewicz, p.51. Hopkins, pp. 37-38. On Lenin's legacy and the history of the Bolshevik press see Hopkins pp. 53-71 and Roxburgh pp.13-29. One could at this point digress into a long debate over the impact Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev had on the media - many authors, including Hopkins, Roxburgh, Benn and Kenez have done so. (One of the most succinct observations was made by Hopkins in 1970 when he wrote that Stalin had taken Lenin's ideas, built the mass media structure, and simply added "dullness, conformity, and purposefulness" p.53.) For the purposes of this work, however, it must be sufficient to state that at the time of Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary the press was still operating under Leninist principles - as a 'propagandist, agitator, and organizer'.

[20] Roxburgh, p.52.

[21] Roxburgh, p.9.

reinforce the legitimacy of CPSU/Soviet power. As Mark Hopkins has asserted, the press was utilized particularly to create acceptance for innovations:

> The press had been instrumental in altering public attitudes toward farming and manufacturing methods, industrial management, distribution, work and economic planning.... The mass media similarly have worked for popular acceptance of the Communist Party's dominant place in Soviet society, of Stalin as an infallible leader, of the imprisonment and execution of millions of Soviet citizens.... these items scarcely exhaust instances in which the Soviet mass media have prepared or conditioned public opinion.[22]

As demonstrated by Thomas Remington in "Policy Innovation and Soviet Media Campaigns", by the 1970s it was possible to identify a "typical" Soviet campaign in the media intended to forward the ideas of the Politburo.[23] The Soviet press in 1985, therefore, had inherited more than a legacy of censorship. It had also inherited a duty to "generate active and enthusiastic popular commitment to the implementation of the regime's goals in building a future communist society."[24]

The paradigm of Marxist Leninism not only guided most of life in the USSR but was also at the foundation of the state's existence. Leninist beliefs about the role of the media in society dictated not only what topics were considered 'newsworthy' but also the very vocabulary and frameworks of explanation. Although it is significant that conformity was often maintained by extreme measures, the necessity of staying within the parameters of an ideology was not exclusive to the Soviet press. Any press which dared to move outside of an accepted paradigm, would risk becoming

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[22] Hopkins, p.39.

[23] Remington, "Policy Innovation and Soviet Media Campaigns" in The Journal of Politics, Vol.45, No.1 (1983) pp.220-227.

[24] Benn, "Glasnost and the Media" in Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992) p.177.

incomprehensible to its audience. In Daniel Hallin's analysis of the American media during the Vietnam war, he articulated how the prevailing beliefs of a society influence the journalism which emerges from it. During the Cold War, Hallin argued, a certain world view came to dominate American thinking so completely that it became virtually impossible for any member of that society to step outside of that paradigm: "Americans simply knew no other language for thinking or for communicating about the world."[25] Journalists were no exception to this rule. As Hallin explained, reporters were confronted with the problem of taking complex, distant events and translating them into concise "stories" which were understandable to their audience. In doing so, these journalists inevitably relied upon "the symbolic tools" of the dominant ideology - that is, in this situation, the familiar vocabulary of the Cold War. In the case of Vietnam, every conflict could be related to a "familiar axis of conflict"; "it enabled the journalist to explain to the news audience (and to him or herself), with minimum effort and, at least in appearance, great clarity, 'what it all meant'...."[26] Hallin's ideas are no less useful when examining the Soviet media during the Gorbachev era - a dominant ideology, in this case Marxist Leninism, had been employed for decades as the sole framework for explaining events and ideas. The true power of this framework was that it was not coercively forced upon people as a matter of indoctrination, at least not by the 1980s - it was, for the majority, part of their way of thinking in the same way that certain ideas (such as self-reliance, private property, and individualism) are 'ingrained" in the Western "psyche." The difficulties of

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[25] Daniel Hallin, The Uncensored War (Berkely: University of California press, 1989), p.50.
[26] Hallin, p.50.

achieving material changes in the Soviet economy and the conservative backlash which political reform incited would later testify to the difficulties of trying to infringe upon an accepted paradigm.

The Soviet press was, therefore, not simply a mimic of the Party, but rather it was the logical extension of an ideology which held a radically different conception of man and his relation to society. At this fundamental level, the Western and the Soviet press were similar - both reflected the basic ideologies of the society in which they evolved. As Peter Kenez argued:

> Propaganda is nothing more than the attempt to transmit social and political values.... The intent of influencing others is hardly objectionable. When we think we disapprove of propaganda, it usually turns out that we really object to its goals or methods.[27]

Despite the tendency of Western analysts to regard Soviet journalism as a passive reflection of the views and decisions of the Party and state apparatus, in reality, the Soviet media was a much more complex and multi-faceted institution. The press while undoubtedly acting within the framework of the overt ideology of the Party, also resonated with the education, deep-held beliefs and the personalities of the people who created it. As Jeffrey Brooks noted in an article on socialist realism in *Pravda*: "Editors and authors produced newspapers following party directives... but the result... was a discourse derived as much from the spontaneous, if politically constrained, reactions to Soviet life as from the leaders' wishes."[28] *Pravda* was not just the product of directive: "The newspaper was also the work of people who

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[27] Kenez, The Birth of the Propaganda State (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.4.
[28] Jeffrey Brooks, "Socialist Realism in Pravda" in Slavic Review, Vol.54, No.3, p.975.

verbalized their own experiences, lexicons and observations in an effort to make the world around them intelligible within the official given limits."[29]

The press was, in the most basic sense, an expression of Soviet culture. It would, of course, be much simpler to view the press simply as a tool of the CPSU - to argue, for instance, that *glasnost* in the Soviet media consisted solely of the CPSU leadership's conscious decision to publicize certain issues such as corruption and alcoholism. However, as tempting as such a straightforward approach may appear it offers one little insight into the real dynamic of change which gripped the USSR between 1985 and 1991. It is the subject of inquiry in this work, that the truly interesting and significant changes provoked by the policy of *glasnost* affected the Soviet press on a much more profound level; that the press moved gradually from propagandizing the views of the authorities to examining the realities of Soviet life; and that, in essence, a policy of limited openness grew into a radical rethinking of the paradigm which guided that society.

It is a basic assumption of this work that the press simultaneously reflects society, influences society, and is a product of that society. The publication of certain topics and ideas, and the absence of others roughly defined the parameters of acceptable public discourse. It is beyond the scope of the present work to argue about how much or how little people were affected by the media or about to what degree the media was a reflection of peoples' beliefs. Rather it is an attempt to use the press as a window into the paradigm of thought which governed Soviet life. Specifically, it is an attempt to examine how the policy of *glasnost* changed the Soviet press, and in turn to

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[29] Brooks, p.975.

consider how the transformation of 'acceptable public discourse' affected the fate of the Soviet Union. Between 1985 and 1991, *perestroika*, the overarching policy of restructuring, stuttered and faltered resulting in more dislocation than revitalization. Attempts to overhaul the economic system were ultimately stalled by a myriad of factors and succeeded ultimately only in aggravating the material conditions of life in the country. Nevertheless, the handmaiden policy of *glasnost*, conceived of as a limited openness which would facilitate economic restructuring, evolved into a degree of freedom of expression unparalleled in Soviet or Russian history. Moving with an unexpected internal momentum, *glasnost* allowed for a fundamental change in what could be said, written and expressed within the borders of the USSR. Within the frame of only six years, subjects which would have once earned a citizen a sentence to the gulag were being bellowed to the masses from the tops of Russian tanks. Opinions, or at least the expression of opinions, had been transformed.

The present examination of the role of the Soviet press in the process of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, focuses solely on the impact of these policies in one, relatively small, weekly newspaper - *Moscow News* (MN). The selection of this paper as a subject of inquiry was certainly not made because MN was in any way typical of the Soviet press. MN was a product of the *Novosti Press Agency* (APN) which had been established in 1961 to foster friendship and goodwill and to "present a sympathetic Soviet face to the world." In that capacity APN published *Moscow News* originally in English and ultimately in nine languages (including Russian.) MN's subject matter and the fact that it was published in foreign languages identified it as

principally a "conduit of propaganda to foreign publics."[30] Although some may argue that MN's status as a fringe newspaper intended primarily for foreign consumption and read domestically only by a privileged elite makes it unworthy of examination as a barometer of change within the Soviet media, there are convincing reasons for its use. It seems probable that MN's total lack of importance prior to the Gorbachev era made it a suitable candidate for the most extreme *glasnost* experiment. MN underwent a radical transformation in late 1986 and early 1987 following the appointment of Yegor Yakovlev as the new editor-in-chief. Yakovlev who had previously worked as a journalist for both *Izvestia* (1975-1984) and *Pravda* (1984-1985) was ostensibly sent to MN with the directive to "publish articles which other Soviet newspapers did not dare print." He assiduously followed these orders transforming MN from a "notorious propaganda sheet... into the most famous voice of *glasnost* and *perestroika*."[31]

During the '*glasnost*' period MN distinguished itself by its radicalism earning the praise of foreign observers such as Radio Liberty and numerous analysts, as well as the censure of numerous conservatives (most notably Yegor Ligachev.) One Soviet observer characterized MN as the "king's fool... allowed to say sacramental things that would cost others their heads."[32] MN and the journal *Ogonyok* (edited by Vitaly Korotich) would between 1986 and 1990 typify a new type of Soviet journalism. Unlike the big papers, *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, which were constrained by tradition and in many ways too close to the authorities to be genuinely open, this new 'liberal' press

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[30] Remington, The Truth of Authority (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), p.113.

[31] From The Biographical Dictionary of the Former Soviet Union (London: Bowker-Saur, 1992), p. 185.

[32] George N. Vachnadze, Secrets of Journalism in Russia (Nova Science Publishers, 1992), p.101.

took its stand on the boundaries of acceptable debate. *Glasnost* also eventually bred a press more conservative than the central press, exemplified by the papers *Sovetskaya Rossiya* and *Krasnaya Zvezda*. By 1991, the press in the Soviet Union, although still distinctly partisan, encompassed a wide spectrum of ideas and opinions. This assertion of MN's radicalism, however, does not imply that MN was not intended for foreign consumption, or that it was not intended as a showpiece. Rather it is the truth of that statement, the fact that MN was closely connected to the official drive for reform which makes it of value. MN, in this respect, paralleled *glasnost* as a whole. It began as a campaign of limited openness directed by the upper echelons of the Party, but was transformed into a genuine openness of expression beyond the Party's grasp. At some point *glasnost*, with *Moscow News* in the lead, went over the edge.

In September 1991, one month following the attempted coup by conservative forces which rocked the foundations of the USSR, the deputy chief editor of the weekly newspaper *Moskovskie Novosti* (the Russian language edition of MN) acknowledged that that paper's policy had contributed to the undermining of Soviet authority. Aleksandr Kabakov stated that while MN had not acted overtly against the establishment, it had functioned as "the spy who constantly informs the regime's most active opponents of its weak points, of the gaps in the walls of its crumbling fortress."[33] Such an admission stands as a remarkable testament to the depth of change which had occurred in the Soviet media, in general, and MN, in particular, between 1985 and 1991. By 1991, the press had clearly moved beyond its narrowly

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[33] RFE/RL Research Institute Conference Report, "The Role of the Media in Political and Economic Change," in Report on the USSR (Vol.3, No.43, 1991), 2.

defined mandate as an agitator, organizer and propagandist of the Communist cause. The profundity of the transformation of the press would thus seem to merit some examination - what, indeed, had changed in Soviet newspapers to turn them from loyal servants into intrepid spies and saboteurs?

The following analysis attempts to trace the change in topics, tone and vocabulary which occurred on the pages of *Moscow News*. Generally speaking, any examination of the media is inherently subjective, in the analyst's interpretation and even choice of focus. This study does not, therefore, purport to be completely objective - the choice of issues that were traced through the seven year period was obviously influenced by the writer's preconceptions of what constitutes news. Moreover, the author's perception of what topics were dominating the paper is in no way infallible, although every effort was made to ensure a thorough examination. It is arguable that a more "scientific" approach would have yielded less biased and more easily quantifiable results. However, such an approach would have been feasible only through taking a sampling of each year and it would therefore not allow for an analysis of the 'big picture' that was the main goal of this project. Furthermore, although a quantification of column space devoted to topics, etc. may have been extrapolated into some informative statistics about MN's news coverage, it would certainly have not done justice to the complexity of the transformation which *glasnost* brought to Soviet life.

This work, moreover, presupposes a cursory knowledge of the "events" of Soviet history between 1985 and 1991. It is not intended to provide such a history

since in essence it is an examination of perceptions not of "reality." The author has relied heavily on the anthology Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics, edited by Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman, as well as the USSR Facts and Figures Annual, to provide a framework for the analysis. David Remnick's Lenin's Tomb: Last Days of the Empire, which presents an imminently readable chronicle of the Gorbachev years, was also relied upon heavily. A journalist himself, Remnick has done an unparalleled job of putting Soviet journalism into a greater social/historical context. The narrative which underlies this thesis is a complex one detailing the progression of a limited programme of reform into a revolution which destroyed an empire.

THE CAMPAIGNS: POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS (1985-1988)[1]

The press is the mirror of the processes taking place in society, it is also an instrument of renewal and democratization and glasnost.
[Dmitry Kazutin, *Moscow News* political analyst][2]

Glasnost, as it was discussed in 1985, was a policy. Its literal meaning which can be [loosely] translated as 'frankness', should not overshadow the connotations it carried as a catchword of the CPSU - which defined it as a limited openness intended to further the cause of restructuring. The word was, moreover, not an innovation in itself, but had been used by Brezhnev as far back as 1968 and had been incorporated into the 1977 Constitution.[3] Nonetheless, it is through this policy of *glasnost* that one can observe the progress (and retreat) of economic and political reforms in the USSR. The nature of the proposed restructuring called for 'wide publicity' and thus required the Soviet press to fulfill its traditional role as an organizer and mobilizer of the population. Because of the close relationship between the Party/State apparatus and the media, and the previously discussed assumptions about the role of the press in Soviet society, it is not surprising that the Soviet newspaper had "an overriding inclination to defend, explain, and promote management's - the party-government

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[1] The decision to break apart the coverage of politics and economics at the end of 1988, was based largely on the argument that the new electoral law which is decided upon in Dec. 1988 constituted a significant break from tradition and that the consequent Congress elected in Spring 1989 proved to be a major watershed in Soviet history. Such a claim can only be substantiated in the context of a full discussion of these events which will occur in the final chapter of this thesis.

[2] *Moscow News* (hereafter MN), No.17 (May1-8, 1988) p.8.

[3] Benn, From *Glasnost* to Freedom of Speech, p.12. Benn also notes that since *'glasnost'* was already part of the "official Soviet vocabulary" nobody could consequently "accuse [Gorbachev] of ideological heresy."

apparatus - policies and views."[4] The press was called upon to publicize or propagandize new political, economic, and social initiatives. The use of the press as a vehicle to campaign for innovation was a central feature of the Soviet media system.[5]

Gorbachev's utilization of the media as a platform for reform was, therefore, not unusual, however the manner and extent of use differed markedly from that of previous administrations. Gorbachev's reliance on the media exceeded that of Brezhnev, Andropov, or Chernenko. Although this seems to be an inevitable consequence of Gorbachev's approach, it has also been noted that Gorbachev focused on the press as an instrument of reform because of his need "to compensate for his relative weakness in the more traditional organs of power."[6] Gorbachev, a relatively younger, more dynamic and less catatonic leader than any of his three aged predecessors, was more in the public eye of both the USSR and the world. The media (everywhere) cultivated a humanized image of the new General Secretary as a 'man of the people.'[7] But besides using the media to enhance his own public image, Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* - a frank discussion of the real problems facing the Soviet Union and the wide publicity of their solutions - necessitated an unparalleled

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[4] Hopkins, p.31. It is undeniable that the Soviet media shares a unique attachment to the institutions of Soviet politics - particularly the state apparatus and the CPSU. The two main national papers *Izvestia* and *Pravda* are, respectively the official organs of the state and Party. Similarly, most other papers are controlled by state, Party institutions or individual enterprises or trade organizations. The key position of editor-in-chief is usually one given through political patronage rather than professional merit

[5] RAND, vii. Hopkins, p.39.

[6] Gail W. Lapidus and Andrei Melville, eds., The *Glasnost* Papers: Voices on Reform from Moscow (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), p.21.

[7] See, for example: MN, No. 9 (March 8-15, 1987) p.4; No. 41 (Oct 18-25, 1987) p. 1. Although a discussion of the foreign press coverage of Gorbachev is beyond the scope of this, ample evdience exists to testify to Gorbachev's positive press image in the West - including his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990.

use of the Soviet press. Regardless of the motivation, the Soviet media dutifully reported the plans and aspirations of the new General Secretary, but in doing so it was expected to engage in a level of 'frankness' about Soviet society which constituted a rather abrupt break from the requisite optimism of the preceding decades. It became increasingly apparent that the glowing idealism that had dominated domestic "news coverage" for years was to be gradually replaced with a more critical, and, most would argue, more accurate, appraisal of life in the USSR.

The APN foreign-language weekly *Moscow News*, undoubtedly within its mandate of publishing a 'view of life in the USSR', joined in the process of publicizing the ambitions of the new administration. MN's coverage of political and economic events in 1985 and 1986 remained, for the most part, within the perimeters defined by the authorities. Criticisms of the economic situation, and relatively frank discussion of several key socio-economic issues (for example, the shortage of certain foods, the existence of corruption in trade, and the existence of an acute housing problem) were balanced by affirmations of the overall superiority of socialism and the great potential of the Soviet economy and were generally not outside the scope of problems already admitted to by the CPSU. In late 1986, however, a new editor-in-chief assumed control of MN. The appointment of Yegor Yakovlev to this post proved to be a major watershed for the paper. Under Yakovlev, MN was transformed from an "unreadable" propaganda publication into one of the flagships of *glasnost*. The appointment of Yakovlev, like all other editorial appointments in the Soviet press, was an act of political patronage. Although there is little primary evidence to substantiate this fact,

it seems apparent that Gorbachev and his supporters moved in late 1986 and early 1987 to install "new reform-minded editors" to many of the major journals and several newspapers.[8] David Remnick, the Moscow correspondent for the *Washington Post*, stated simply that Yakovlev, once appointed by "the liberals in the Politburo", was told "to transform this tourist giveaway sheet... into a 'tribune of reform'." In 1987, Yakovlev made several changes to the paper which oriented it more towards a domestic rather than a foreign audience. The amount of world news decreased sharply and new features focussed on Soviet affairs. By early 1987, the letters-to-the-editor page testified to a growing domestic readership. Although MN's coverage of political and economic events continued to be strongly supportive of Gorbachev's efforts at reform throughout 1987 and 1988, MN definitely became one of the more radical papers of the central press particularly as opposition to *perestroika* and *glasnost* grew in the Party and in society at large.[9] The paper would be singled out for criticism by Politburo conservative, Yegor Ligachev, as early as 1987[10] and in 1988, following the publication of Nina Andreeyeva's anti-*perestroika* letter in *Sovetskaya Rossia*, Y. Yakovlev and Vitaly Korotich of *Ogonyok*, "the two best-known liberal editors" would not be invited to Ligachev's meeting (in Gorbachev's absence) with the leaders

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[8] R.W. Davies, Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p.130. The appointment of reformers such as Y. Yakovlev and Zalygin (*Novy Mir*) coincided with the reemergence of many surpressed works as well as the beginnings of the reexamination of Soviet history (Y. Afanasyev was also appointed Rector of the Moscow Historical-Archive around this time) - these development will be discussed in a later chapter.

[9] MN was undoubtedly exceeded in its extremism by several Republican papers, but this thesis isn't about republican newspapers.

[10] Current Digest of the Soviet Press (1987) Vol.39, No.37, p.1. (hereafter CDSP)

of the Soviet media.[11] MN would remain staunchly pro-*perestroika* even when holding this position began to constitute an undermining of Soviet authority.

In the first years of reform (1985-1986), however, MN's domestic reporting of political and economic reforms was largely dictated by a revolution-from-above. *Glasnost* had distinct limits - it was to be openness "applied only to the new leaderships stated concerns - indiscipline, drunkenness, corruption, inefficiency, inertia, and all those shortcoming that stood in the way of... 'reconstruction' and 'acceleration'."[12] Nonetheless, MN's changing coverage still constituted a significant break from the past in openness about problems, types of topics considered newsworthy and in the level of criticism allowed.

The major political events of the period 1985-1988 were the 27th Party Congress (February 1986) and the 19th Party Conference (June 28- July 1, 1988), and an assortment of Central Committee Plenary meetings . These events were key, of course, not only for political changes but for the enunciation of intended economic reforms. Generally, Gorbachev's economic policy emphasized the decentralization of economic management and the institution of true cost-accounting for enterprises - with a later emphasis on the growth of the cooperative movement and other versions of limited private enterprise. In the political realm, democratization and later the reform of Soviet political institutions gradually became significant components of the new administration's agenda. Again, an examination of the coverage of these issues in

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[11] David Remnick, Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p.76.

[12] Roxburgh, 69.

Moscow News reveals that certain topics gain and lose emphasis as the years pass reflecting, it would seem, the changing concerns of the reformers themselves.

In the first months of 1985, prior to Gorbachev's rise to power, the dominant image in *Moscow News*' domestic coverage was that of the success of socialism and the continuing contentedness of the Soviet people. The first issue of the year heralded the achievements of the 11th Five Year Plan and anticipated the success of the election to the Supreme Soviet claiming that "since the past elections the country has gained strength economically and socially."[13] There was a tacit acknowledgment that all was not perfect: "there are unresolved, sometimes very severe problems in the economy of our country,"[14] however this admission was quite limited and countered (in the same article) with the assertion that the Soviet Union still ensured universal education and superlative medical care and that, in general, whatever problems the Soviet Union had were of a significantly different nature than those of capitalism. The benefits of socialism were also extolled through comparison with the West. A typical example of this appeared in a January letter to the editor, sent in by a Spanish reader: "I live in a consumer society, indifferent to the individual.... Unemployment, drug addiction and organized crime form the basis of the society...."[15] MN, like all other Soviet papers, never reported similar signs of moral decay in the USSR.

The overwhelming majority of articles were positive and often highlighted the "leading role" of the CPSU and its unity with the masses. With regard to the election of People's Deputies, MN reported that "The elections were nothing surprising. The

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[13] MN, No.52, (Jan. 6 - 13, 1985) p.1.
[14] MN, No.52, (Jan. 6 - 13, 1985) p.12.
[15] MN, No. 52, (Jan. 6 - Jan. 13, 1985) p.2.

CPSU's internal and foreign policy... enjoys the people's unanimous support."[16] The authorities were being held accountable for both their successes and their failures. An article entitled "Winter" appeared in the Jan. 27 - Feb. 3 issue which stated that local authorities had been "subjected to biting criticism" for allowing record low temperatures and heavy snowfall to interfere with the lives of Muscovites. Such criticism, furthermore, could be found "practically in every issue of any Soviet newspaper." Again, however, while admitting to the occasional problems and the need for vigilance the article insisted that such complications were relatively minor since "the people know the Soviet State will take care of them."[17]

There is evidence, therefore, of some liberalization even before Chernenko's death[18] - which, incidentally, occurred with no (published) forewarning - on March 10th. The death of Konstantin Chernenko was covered with ritualistic respect. He was hailed as a "patriot and internationalist" who had spent his whole life forwarding the cause of socialism and fighting imperialism. In a particularly poetic turn of phrase, it was asserted that Chernenko had "guarded" the unity of the Communist Party "like the apple of his eye."[19] However, despite these accolades, Chernenko's death only shared front page status with the newly elected General Secretary, Mikhail Sergeevich,[20] whose photograph occupied a considerable space on the front page and whose speeches were quoted extensively. The new line was clearly

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[16] MN, No. 9, (Sun. March 3, 1985) p.1.
[17] MN, No. 3, (Jan. 27 - Feb. 3, 1985) p. 3.
[18] White, Gorbachev and After, pp. 8-14.
[19] MN, No.11, (Sun. Mar. 17, 1985) p.1.
[20] MNs coverage of Chernenko's death and Gorbachev's election as General Secretary closely resembled that of the 'official' papers, Pravda and Izvestia. CDSP (1985) Vol.37, No. 9, p.5.

enunciated - the Party was intent on speeding up economic development, "perfecting all aspects of life," developing democracy, and following the "Leninist course of peace and peaceful coexistence."[21] The term "restructuring" made its debut in *Moscow News* in the March 17 issue, and soon became the catch word for the set of economic reforms inaugurated by the new leadership. On May Day, following an April Plenary Meeting (April 23, 1985), the CPSU announced its priorities. These included growth in production, the advance of socialist democracy, and the consolidation of international peace. Essentially, the CPSU wanted to accelerate the socio-economic development of the country .[22]

During this period, there were also reports of some key changes made in the upper echelons of the CPSU as Mikhail Gorbachev strove to consolidate his power. The process of putting his supporters into key positions continued throughout 1985. Most notably Yegor Ligachov and Nikolai Ryzhkov became members of the Politburo[23], and Boris Yeltsin was made Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee,[24] while several people known to oppose the new leader retired or were replaced. By 1986, 52% of the Central Committee's membership had been replaced by new pro-Gorbachev forces.[25] Such changes occurred with little fan-fare in MN, which reported the retirements and appointments of major figures quite matter-of-factly, focusing instead on the substance of upcoming reforms.

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[21] MN, No.11, (Sun. March 17, 1985) p.1.
[22] MN, No. 16, (Apr. 28 - May 5, 1985) p.1.
[23] MN, No. 17 (May 5 -12, 1985) p.1.
[24] MN, No. 27 (July 14 -21, 1985) p.1.
[25] White, p.19.

MN was saturated with coverage of the need to improve the economic system, and reports of "poor management" began to filter into the paper in April and May.[26] In early May, MN reported that the 27th Congress was set to open on February 25, 1986 and that the focus of the forthcoming Congress would be "restructuring the economic mechanism".[27] The main thrust of the paper throughout the latter half of 1985 was undoubtedly the promotion of Gorbachev's economic reforms; the phrases "scientific and technical progress,"[28] "acceleration,"[29] and "intensification"[30] became preeminent in MN's campaign vocabulary. Moreover, the economic goals of acceleration were soon being tied to the Soviet Union's "social problems." In a feature new to MN, a column entitled "Our Commentary", it was asserted that the current changes were aimed at "ensuring the well-being of every Soviet man and woman."[31]

Despite the novelty of the accent on economic and social reconstruction, the tone of reporting was still fairly conservative and uncritical by Western standards. For example, MN's front page report on the "Policy Priorities" of the Central Committee countered calls for growth and acceleration with the following disclaimer: "This does not contradict in the least what MN wrote earlier, reviewing... the economic results of last year." Although problems with the economy had to be brought to the forefront, it was not a criticism of socialism, but merely a realization that the socialist economy

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[26] One of the first examples was an article calling for the restructuring of the iron-and-steel industry which had failed to provide enough material for production . MN, No. 13 (Apr. 7 -14, 1985) p.8.

[27] MN, No. 17 (May 5 - 12, 1985) p.1.

[28] MN, No.23 (June 16 - 23, 1985) p.13

[29] MN, No. 24 (June 23 - 30, 1985) p.1.

[30] MN, No.25 (June 30 - July 7, 1985) p.10.

[31] MN, No.40 (Oct. 6 - 13, 1985) p.3.

was capable of "accomplishing more."[32] Furthermore, articles emphasizing the leading role of the Party continued to appear. In late October 1985, another article appeared in "Our Commentary" which stated that "The Party's... entire work is directed toward improving the Soviet people's living conditions and at strengthening international peace," and further asserted that "The Soviet people are solidly behind the course."[33] There was also a concerted effort to legitimize Gorbachev's plans through association with Leninist principles. Supporting the claim that "life is developing in accordance with what Lenin foresaw", it was noted that the preCongress documents were "permeated with his ideas."[34] In April, "Our Commentary" stated, "Lenin's ideas are most strikingly and fully embodied in the concept of acceleration and in the paths devised by the Party for its implementation."[35] The overwhelming emphasis on the crucial role of the Party and the affinity of the reforms with Leninism demonstrated the initially conservative nature of Gorbachev's programme - it was clearly intended to improve the lives of Soviet citizens, but also to reinforce the role of Party and ideology in society. It was also apparent that MN's political and economic coverage in 1985 was part of the campaign launched from within the leading ranks of the Party.

On the eve of the 27th Party Congress (February 1986) the initial success of the "criticism/self-criticism" approach was already being proclaimed in *Moscow News*, largely in an attempt to stem foreign readers "with only a cursory knowledge of Soviet

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[32] MN, No.16, (Apr.28 - May 5, 1985) p.1.
[33] MN, No.43 (Oct. 27 - Nov. 3, 1985) p.3.
[34] MN, No. 3 (Jan.26 - Feb. 2, 1986) p.1.
[35] MN, No. 16 (April 27 - May 4, 1986) p.3.

reality" from jumping to the conclusion about the state of crisis in the USSR.[36] Indeed, a 'balanced' approach - the tendency to counter negative reports with reassurances - dominated MN's domestic coverage during 1985 and 1986. It was a tendency echoed [echoing] in Mikhail Gorbachev's February 25, 1986 speech to the 27th Congress which was published in MN No. 9 (1986). MN's coverage of the Congress in this issue consisted of the front page announcing the opening of the 27th Congress followed by a 23 page reprint of the General Secretary's address. Gorbachev's speech heralded the achievements of the Soviet Union in economic, cultural and social fields which "convincingly demonstrated the vitality of the Marxist Leninist doctrine and socialism's tremendous potential", while at the same time acknowledging the "deficiencies in our political and practical activities, the unfavorable tendencies in the economy and the social and moral sphere...."[37] The reprint of Gorbachev's speech was divided into six sections: 1. The Contemporary World (p.4); 2. The Strategic Course (p.7); 3. Further Democratization (p.14); 4. Aims of the Party's foreign policy (p.15); 5. The Party (p. 18); 6. Results of Discussion of the Party programme (p.21). The bulk of the speech, therefore, was devoted to a discussion of the "strategic course" designed to implement the "decision to accelerate the socio-economic development of our society", which had originally been made at the April 1985 Plenary meeting.[38]

In his scheme, Gorbachev spoke of a general "structural reconstruction" based on scientific and technical progress, and new forms of management. His stated aim

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[36] MN, No. 8 (March 2 - 9, 1986) p.3.
[37] MN, No. 9 (March 9 -16, 1986) p.3.
[38] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p.3.

was to double the national income by the end of the century, to increase production potential and labour productivity. This was all to be done through "modernization" and the "restructuring of the economic mechanism and management system."[39] The "Strategic Course" section detailed methods to improve science and technology; announced plans to introduce "true cost accounting" and to adjust agrarian policy in order to grapple with the food supply problem; and discussed the need to increase the autonomy of enterprises and introduce "genuine cost-accounting" while increasing "the efficacy of the center."[40] The speech also acknowledged the need to enhance the standard of living of Soviet citizens through raising real incomes; combating unearned incomes while removing impediments to those legally earning supplementary incomes; saturating "the market with diverse goods and services"; tackling the "housing problem" by aiming to provide every family with a separate dwelling by 2000 and improving distribution practices; protecting and improving the health of the people through amelioration of health services, fighting alcoholism and moving towards the protection and "rational use" of natural resources. It also touched on a need to improve class relations, the status of women and "relations among the peoples of the USSR."[41] This brief summary of topics discussed by Gorbachev provides an almost complete table of contents of the articles which arose in MN over the next few months.

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[39] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p.7.

[40] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p.8-9. The ambiguous term "cost-accounting" apparently referred to the revolutionary idea that industries might attempt to produce according to demand and to try to (at least) keep the price of production close to the price of sale. (I.e. Balance the books.)

[41] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p.12-13

Prior to advent of the new administration and the institution of the policy of *glasnost*, the open acknowledgment of such problems in Soviet life rarely made the pages of MN. Again, one must remember that the paper was intended for an external audience and as such endeavoured to paint a favourable picture of life within the USSR. In 1986, particularly after the 27th Congress, however, several previously taboo subjects began to appear. Pre-eminent among the topics were those already highlighted in the General Secretary's address. Both wage-leveling and unearned incomes[42] were admitted to be issues requiring attention. The former was depicted as an out-dated custom (it had originally been a reaction to the "enormous social inequality" which existed in pre-Revolutionary times) which now was coming "into conflict with both social justice and economic expedience." The definitive statement appeared as a headline of an article in October 1986: "Goodbye to Wage-Levelling."[43] The lack of consumer goods was dealt with in articles such as "Improving product quality is a crucial economic problem."[44] Corruption in trade was also exposed - one of the most notable pieces discussed the various incidences of embezzlement in Moscow shops that resulted in the arrests of thousands of people.[45] "The housing problem" which had actually been acknowledged in late 1985, also received further examination.[46] The most notable 'campaign,' however, was the one launched against alcoholism. MN, being a paper addressed largely to foreigners, did not particpate actively in this campaign. However, it did announce that the media had been charged

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[42] For example: "Social Justice" MN, No.22 (June 8-15, 1986) p.9.

[43] MN, No. 31 (Aug. 10-17, 1986) p.8-9; MN, No. 32 (Aug. 17-24, 1986) p.12; MN, No. 41 (Oct. 19-26, 1986)

[44] MN, No. 47 (Nov. 30 - Dec. 7, 1986)

[45] MN, No. 39 ((Oct. 5-12, 1986) p.12.

with "enlisting public opinion to fight this social evil," and thus highlighting the fact that "intolerance for the abuse of alcohol" was an attitude to be "*created.*"[47]

Apart from addressing these various socioeconomic problems, the 27th Congress also provided a platform for Gorbachev's views on the necessity for further democratization; the deepening of socialist democracy was seen as imperative to socioeconomic development.[48] Among his suggestions, Gorbachev urged the improvement of inner Party democracy since the Party was "the guiding force and the principle guarantor" of reform, and called for promoting the autonomy of local Soviets which would, in turn, help to mobilize the masses. He asked for more active involvement by social organizations, particularly trade unions, and for the utilization of direct democracy through work collectives.[49] Finally, the deepening of socialist democracy would include openness and the pursuance of the reforms would require wide publicity in the organs of the mass media. "Communists," Gorbachev asserted, "want the truth."[50]

The MN issue that followed this transcription of Gorbachev's address to the Congress was strong in its affirmation of the principles which had been enunciated. It was reported that, in fact, the targets of 11th five-year plan had not been reached - and

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[46] MN, No. 33 (Sun. Aug. 18, 1985) p.8. .

[47] MN, No.21 (June 2-9, 1985) p.3; No.22 (June 9-16, 1985) p.12; No.3 (Jan.26 - Feb.2, 1986) p.13. Later, indicating the expansion of *glasnost*, MN would criticize the campaign against alcoholism arguing that the reduction of production and restrictions on sales only created new negative phenomena (such as sugar shortages caused by the rise in moonshining) and did not acknowledge the need of even the 'respectable' people for a bottle or two for "calculation" (i.e. necessary bribes). MN, No.42 (Oct.26-Nov.2, 1986) p.13; No.49 (Dec.14-21, 1986) p.4; No.44 (Nov. 8-15, 1987) p.12; No.23 (June 12-19, 1988) p.14.

[48] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p.7.

[49] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p. 14.

[50] MN, No. 9 (March 9-16, 1986) p.15.

that this was due to a lack of efficiency and the "slack" nature of science and technological progress. However, echoing Gorbachev's designation of the April Plenary meeting as a "turning point,"[51] it was asserted that the remedy to these problems had been found.[52] Other pieces in this and several consequent issues confirmed the outcome of the Congress and were generally supportive of "the Party's collective thought"[53] and "the entire nation's effort to follow the Party's word."[54] It was in this setting of support and reassurance, that one slightly radical item appeared - a reprint of a speech by Boris Yeltsin, which went to the unorthodox length (in 1986) of first admitting to difficulty in combating abuses and then asserting the culpability of the Party: "Why is it that we cannot root out bureaucracy, social injustice, and other abuses from our life? Why, even now, has the demand for radical change gotten bogged down in the inert layer of people just serving their time and who have a Party card in their pocket? My opinion is... that a number of Party leaders lack the courage to objectively assess... the situation... to speak the truth."[55] Although more radical than most MN political news, the publication of Yeltsin's comments foreshadowed MN's commitment to *glasnost* which would become more pronounced under the editorship of Yakovlev.

The theme of democratization became prevalent in *Moscow News* throughout late 1986 and 1987. The emphasis that Mikhail Gorbachev had made on the need to democratize Soviet society was evident on the pages of the newspaper, to both its

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[51] MN, No. 10 (Sun. March 9, 1986) p.3.
[52] "Acceleration concept translated into planned target," MN, No. 10 (Sun. March 9, 1986) p.1.
[53] MN, No. 10 (Sun. March 9, 1986) p.1.
[54] MN, No. 11 (March 23-30, 1986) p.1.
[55] MN, No. 10 (Sun. March 9, 1986) p.4.

domestic and foreign audiences. In October 1986, Gorbachev was quoted on the front page arguing that it was necessary to reshape people's mentality: "[W]e must draw people into the process of reconstruction through the democratization of society."[56] Democratization was thus linked to ensuring the participation of the masses and the exposure of those acting as 'brakes' on *perestroika*. In an editorial entitled "Who needs democracy in the USSR and why?" it was asserted that democracy was "unnecessary for bureaucrats" and a "pain in the neck for the loafer." The CPSU, therefore, gave "top priority" to democratization.[57] This "revolutionary" turn to make Soviet life "more open and democratic"[58] was, of course, integrally tied to the policy of *glasnost*. It was only with *glasnost* and democratization that it would be possible to bridge the gap between talking and doing - to turn the ideas behind *perestroika* into tangible results.

As 1987 began, much of the optimism which had immediately followed the 27th Congress had dissipated. Despite all the well-laid plans, little substantial change had occurred. In MN's first issue of 1987, the topic of 'conservatism' was explicitly dealt with.[59] The article "Reconstruction and Social Struggle in Society" considered the struggle between old and new ideas. The masses of the population were, of course, firmly in favour of reforms: "the working people are demanding reconstruction." However, on the whole, society was divisible into three groups: firstly, those actively working for *perestroika*; secondly, those who were in favour of

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[56] MN, No. 39 (Oct. 5-12, 1989) p.1.
[57] MN, No. 40 (Sun. Oct. 5, 1986) p. 3.
[58] MN, No. 45 (Nov. 16-23, 1986) p.1.
[59] I.e., instead of vague references to loafers and bureaucrats, MN begins to target 'conservatives'

it, but required some instruction; and finally, those who understood but opposed reconstruction.[60] The presence of a conservative force in society had to be combated - the weapons were democracy and openness. In the Jan. 25 - Feb. 1, 1987 issue, Dmitry Kazutin, MN's leading political analyst, stated emphatically that conservatism was "threatened by openness", and that its chief enemy was, therefore the press, "the most important tool being used to promote openness."[61]

At the end of January, the CPSU Central Committee held a significant Plenary Meeting which, in the words of one analyst, initiated "a second, more broadly reformist stage."[62] At the plenum , Gorbachev clearly stated that *perestroika* would only be possible if the political system was democratized. Only this democratization would "unleash" the individual, combat "retarding mechanisms", and guarantee the irreversibility of restructuring. *Moscow News*, already heavily weighted with pro-democracy statements, was solidly supportive of the Plenary Meeting. The first post-meeting issue came out on February 16th and contained both a report "On Reorganization" and a commentary by Kazutin which asserted that democratization was the "principal tool" of reconstruction since it would "unshackle" the creative powers of individuals. Kazutin stated that the "overwhelming majority" of people supported reorganization, but that they were also "concerned over its fate." The key announcement, however, was his demand for the need to improve the electoral system,

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[60] MN, No. 1 (Jan. 11-18, 1987) p.12.

[61] MN, No. 3 (Jan. 25 - Feb. 1, 1987) p.3. It is worthy of note that this is only one of several articles praising the media as "watchdogs of the people" (MN, No. 52 (Jan 4- 11, 1987) p.6.) , and that they appear roughly around the same time Gorbachev is to meet with the heads of the mass media. (MN, No. 8 (Mar. 1-8, 1987) pp.8-9)

[62] White, pp. 28-29.

particularly to allow for a larger number of candidates.[63] The following issue, displaying the headline "Democracy Is Vital" across its front page, also contained another piece advocating electoral reform. Yevgeny Ambartsumov's commentary was more radical, arguing that past 'democratic' institutions in the USSR had been "fake" and that people were "aware that their opinions did not matter." The absence of choice had made elections irrelevant and, as a result, the "vague concept of a law-abiding society was being eroded...." The reorganization of the political system announced by the Central Committee meant that, "We are regaining our rights... as well as our dignity."[64]

The need for "genuine democracy" was to be fulfilled by multi-candidate elections[65] as well as a growing focus on creating a law-based state. The radical suggestion of electoral reform was countered by a continued emphasis on its consistency with the ideals of socialism. Socialism and democracy were portrayed as indivisible [66] and headlines such as "More Democracy! More Socialism!" were common.[67] Meanwhile, the concept of a law-based state became more significant and articles appeared on the need to protect individual rights,[68] to reform the Criminal Code,[69] and to assure "Freedom of Thought and Speech."[70] These were all in keeping with Gorbachev's assertion that democracy could not exist outside of the law[71] and

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[63] MN, No. 5 (Feb. 8-15, 1987) p.1.
[64] MN, No. 6 (Feb. 15-22, 1987) p.3.
[65] MN, No. 27 (July 12-19, 1987) p.3.
[66] MN, No. 46 (Nov. 22-19, 1987) p.3.
[67] MN, No. 29 (July 26-Aug. 2,1987) p.12.
[68] MN, No. 14 (April 12-19, 1987) p.7.
[69] MN, No. 34 (Aug. 30 - Sept. 6, 1987) p.13.
[70] MN, No. 30 (Aug. 2-9, 1987) p.10
[71] MN, No. 33 (Aug. 23-30,1987) p.3.

with the appearance of two new laws, reprinted in the supplement section of MN No. 29. The first was a law "On nationwide discussion of key issues of state life" and the second, aimed at protecting civil rights, "On procedure for legal appeal against unlawful acts by officials infringing upon the rights of citizens."[72] While the effectiveness of these two new laws would remain obscure, their appearance illustrated a distinct drive by the new administration to reinforce the idea of rule-of-law.

The crucial political event of 1988 was the convening of the 19th Party Conference (June 28 - July 1, 1988). In the months preceding the Conference, MN often ran articles under the page banner "Heading Toward the 19th Party Conference." These articles covered a range of issues asking questions such as "What kind of democracy does the Soviet Union need?"[73] and offering opinions about the need for greater inner-Party democracy,[74] an increased role for the Soviets,[75] and various suggestions on how to democratize the electoral system.[76] There was also recognition of the need to consider non-Party opinion in the process of democratization.[77] Another Plenary meeting in spring of 1988 approved the Theses for the 19th Party Conference asserting that "the entire Party and all the people" were able to "assess... the ideas." In the same item, it was noted that the "euphoria of 1985" had passed, that conservatism had become widespread, and that a unity of words and deeds was indispensable.[78] The calls for reform were getting slightly more radical. MN No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988),

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[72] MN, No. 29 (July 26-Aug. 2,1987) supplement.
[73] MN, No. 9 (March 6-13, 1988) pp.8-9.
[74] MN, No. 10 (March 13-20, 1988) p.3. MN, No. 12 (Mar. 27-Apr. 3, 1988) p.8.
[75] MN, No. 10 (March 13-20, 1988) p.8.
[76] MN, No. 15 (April 17-14, 1988) p.8; No. 20 (May 22-29, 1988) p.13.
[77] MN, No. 15 (April 17-14, 1988) p.8.
[78] MN, No. 22 (June 5-12, 1988) p.1.

for example, included one article requesting constitutional reform and another discussing "The Party of Non-party people" - both articles, however, were fundamentally in favor of *perestroika*. Melor Sturua's article argued that constitutional reform "which would envisage presidential rule" was necessary since the General Secretary's present position was too tenuous - he could be dismissed by any Plenary meeting of the Central Committee. This was unacceptable because although Gorbachev might not have the support of the whole Party, "practically all Soviet citizens" were in favour of his efforts. Sturua concluded that such a constitutional reform would lead to the creation of a legal socialist state and "the ultimate restoration of Lenin's norms of party life."[79] The second item, on the formation of the People's Front for *Perestroika*, argued that non-Party people were just as capable of being the vanguard since "The dictatorship of the proletariat was really replaced by the dictatorship of the bureaucracy." In a scathing attack, the author wrote "Within the Party, the party of mediocrities triumphed." The division in society could no longer be drawn between Party and non-Party, but rather must be drawn between "fighters [for] and saboteurs of *perestroika*."[80] Both of these articles, as well as other attacks on conservatism, were in part a reaction to the Nina Andreeyeva letter which revealed the strength and conviction of reactionary forces, particularly within the Party. However, one should also note how the themes visible in MN, at least, were building up to the rather dramatic changes that Gorbachev would inaugurate at the 19th Conference.

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[79] MN, No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p.8.
[80] MN, No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p.10.

Information on the 19th Conference appeared in *Moscow News* under the headlines "Rostrum for *glasnost*, democracy, and renewal" and "Four Days that Shook the World."[81] The conference was certainly monumental. In Gorbachev's report to the Party, delivered on June 28, 1988,[82] he identified the basic questions as being how to further restructuring and how to make it irreversible. It was imperative to reform the political system, in order to address the "deep-down reasons" for *perestroika*'s sluggishness. Although some progress had ostensibly been made (for example a 4.6% increase in real incomes), the General Secretary declared that "we have underestimated the extent and gravity of the deformation and stagnation." In order to develop *perestroika* further it was necessary to remain self-critical, to proceed with radical economic reform, and to activate "the intellectual and spiritual potential of society." The latter task would be fostered by the atmosphere of openness which had triggered a "genuine revolution" in the country's cultural life. The "Principal Guarantee" of *perestroika*'s irreversibility, however, was the "radical democratization of socio-political life and a reform of the political system." The present system had proved incapable of protecting the Soviet Union from "stagnation phenomena." A final section of Gorbachev's speech was devoted to a discussion of democratizing the "leading role and the internal activity" of the Party. Gorbachev maintained that *perestroika* was impossible without the Party, but that it was necessary to restore a sense of principles, comradeship, responsibility and efficiency, and, moreover, to clarify the relationship between Party and state organs. There was a "need to enhance

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[81] MN, No. 26 (July 3-10, 1988) p.1; No. 27 (July 10-17, 1988) p.3.
[82] reprinted in MN, No. 27 (July 10-17, 1988) supplement

the role of the supreme bodies of government and administration." In retrospect one could argue that Gorbachev was already planning to create a presidency and was propagandizing it potential value. In his closing speech to the Conference, Gorbachev again affirmed that changes in the election apparatus would occur, the Soviets would be reorganized, and that in the future the Party's role would be determined by its "real prestige and concrete deeds." In the economic sphere it was resolved to continue and deepen economic reforms.[83]

Once again, MN was consistent in its support of the agenda for reform. An outspoken defender of *perestroika* and political reform, the paper published articles endorsing the idea of giving more power to the Soviets (highlighting the need to give the Soviets control over resources and finances)[84] and expanding inner Party democracy.[85] Yegor Yakovlev, reporting on the Central Committee Plenary which agreed to implement the decisions of the Conference and define the particulars of electoral law, legal reforms and measures to accelerate economic reform, wrote that "Persistent democratization is the scaffold."[86] MN subsequently published a "Calendar of Political Renewal" which delineated a timeline for changing the constitution, adding a Law on the Election of People's Deputies, reorganizing the Party apparatus and ultimately holding elections for a Congress of People's Deputies which would then

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[83] reprinted in MN, No. 28 (July 17-24, 1988) supplement

[84] MN, No. 32 (Aug. 14-21, 1988) p.13; No. 34 (Aug. 28-Sept. 4, 1988) p.9; No. 41 (Oct. 16-23, 1988) p.10.

[85] MN, No. 37 (Sept. 18-25, 1988) p.12.

[86] MN, No. 32 (Aug. 14-21, 1988) p.3.

elect a new Supreme Soviet.[87] The crucial step had been made toward establishing a "Legally Guaranteed Democracy" and a "Law Governed State"[88]

While MN's political vocabulary had expanded to include such concepts as democratization, rule-of-law and socialist pluralism, a similar transition had occurred in its economic coverage. While coverage in 1986 had focused on acceleration and technological progress, 1987 coverage focused on the fate of these ideas in the work place. A new feature was introduced to the paper under which the new editor ran articles on the progress of *perestroika* : 'Renewal: Results, Problems, Conflicts'. The State Plan for 1987 had envisioned the introduction of profit-loss accounting, state quality control and the fulfillment of contracts - concrete ways to transform *perestroika* from theory to reality. The tone of the paper reinforced the idea that improving the economy was improving socialism, while at the same time criticizing the phenomena which had become obstacles to change. Thus, articles appeared criticizing the pace of reconstruction and, particularly, the bad habits and lack of imagination impeding it.[89] The values behind the state plan were publicized as self-reliance, accountability and the rejection of bureaucratic control.[90] But most of all, MN attempted to acquaint its readership with new ways of looking at the economy. The "rebirth" of concepts like trade, commerce, joint ventures, competition and the market were the subject of features,[91] and a new column entitled 'Economic Glossary"

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[87] MN, No. 34 (Aug. 28- Sept. 4, 1988) p.8.

[88] MN, No. 27 (July 10-17, 1988) p.13; No. 40 (Oct. 9-16, 1988).

[89] MN, No. 1 (Jan. 11-18, 1987) p. !; No. 4 (Sun. Jan. 25, 1987) p.3; No. 17 (Sun. April 26, 1987) p.3.

[90] MN, No. 2 (Jan. 18-25, 1987) p.3; No. 7 (Feb. 27- March 1, 1987) p. 4.

[91] MN, No. 3 (Jan. 25- Feb. 1, 1987) p. 7; No. 7 (Feb. 27- March 1, 1987) p.9; No. 11 (March 22-29, 1987) pp. 7, 12; No. 22 (June 7-14, 1987) p.1; No. 35 (Sept. 6-13, 1987) p.8

discussed the meaning of terms such as public property, value, inflation, enterprise, cooperatives and wages.[92] The possibility of bankruptcies, and problems in foreign trade were considered.[93] Furthermore, the benefits of privately run farms (cooperatives) and the selling of excess produce by individuals were extolled.[94] The entire country was "Learning to Make Money."[95]

Nineteen Eighty-Eight was hailed as the "Opening Year of Reform" - inaugurated by the Law on State Enterprises which was to make cost-accounting the norm in the Soviet economy. It would seem that titles such as this were repeating what had previously been said at the beginning of 1987; they reflected the same reality - that despite "spiritual" changes in the country, *perestroika* in the economic sphere, thus far, was still only an unrealized dream.[96] The need for radical change and a more vocal protest of its obstruction was manifested in MN in 1988.[97] One can see parallel calls for greater openness and democratization in politics justified on the pages of MN as key to the radical transformation of the economy.[98] Moreover, just as MN's political reporting was beginning to exhibit a greater openness, especially in reference to non-Party political forces, its reporting on the economy began to include more

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[92] MN, No. 31 (August 9-16, 1987) p.9; No. 37 (Sept. 20-27, 1987) p. 9; No. 38 (Sept. 27- Oct. 4, 1987) p.9; No. 41 (Oct. 18-25, 1987) p.9; No. 43 (Nov. 1-8, 1987) p.9; No. 46 (Nov. 22-29, 1987) p.9.

[93] MN, No. 3 (Jan. 25- Feb. 1, 1987) p.12; No. 4 (Sun. Jan. 25, 1987) p.7.

[94] MN, No. 35 (Sept. 6-13, 1987) p. 9; No 39 (Oct. 4-11, 1987) p. 9; No. 43 (Nov. 1-8, 1987) p.9.

[95] MN, No. 49 (Sun. Dec. 6, 1987) p.9.

[96] "From the Revolution of Expectations to the Revolution of Actions" MN , No. 27 (July 10-17, 1987) p.9.

[97] MN, No. 5 (Feb. 7-14, 1988) p.12; "Radical Change," No. 13 (April 3-10, 1988) p. 8; "How to Overcome Deceleration of Acceleration," No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988); "*Glasnost* in the Economy is Yet to Come," No. 28 (July 17-24, 1988) p. 13; "Economic reform is in danger," No. 36 (Sept. 11-18, 1988) p. 10.

[98] MN, No. 13 (April 3-10, 1988) p. 8.

substantial examinations of problems. Articles appeared discussing not only wage leveling, the housing crisis, food shortages and inflation, but also strikes and the need for land reform.[99] For example, a strike by bus drivers in Klaipeda in June was hailed as a "strike for *perestroika*."[100] In November, MN carried a story, "The Strike that Wasn't", about an engineering plant where workers had been denied a shorter work day for 12 years. The issue at hand was that although the plant's workers had decided not to strike, the man who had called for a strike had been fired. His demands for reinstatement were to be considered by the courts. MN concluded, however, that "The important thing is that people have already started openly - to defend their rights."[101] MN's open coverage of this incident was a similarly an important step. Land reform also reappeared as an acceptable topic of discussion. This economic question proved inseparable from the reexamination of history that was simultaneously occurring. Land reform was often discussed in reference to the New Economic Policy which had, ostensibly, been prematurely aborted by Stalin's collectivization which had "distorted" the essential ideas of Lenin's Decree on Land and made the peasants nothing more than hired labour. The aim of *perestroika* was to resurrect these Leninist ideals.[102]

Problems pertaining to the transition to cost-accounting were recounted with surprising frankness. Some articles praised the realism of the new plans - such as a reduction in the expected outputs of Uzbek cotton production.[103] However, other

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[99] On wage leveling - MN, No. 1 (Jan. 10-17, 1988) p.10; "Quantity and Quality Housing by the Year 2000," No. 7 (Feb. 21-28, 1988) p.14; on food shortages - "Where's the Beef" No. 28 (July 17-24, 1988) p.13; "Food Shortages: In general and in particular," No.39 (Oct. 2-9, 1989) p.13.

[100] MN, No. 27 (July 10-17, 1988) p.12.

[101] MN, No. 45 (Nov. 13-20, 1988) p. 12.

[102] MN, No. 45 (Nov. 13-20, 1988) p. 10. See also "Time for Land Reform" No. 32 (Aug. 14-21, 1988) p.10 and "To Whom Should the Land Be Left" No. 49 (Dec. 11-18, 1988) p.12.

[103] MN, No. 4 (Jan. 31- Feb. 7, 1988) p.8.

items appeared which spoke of increasing conflict between enterprises and the central authorities to which they were responsible. A paint plant in Dnetropetrovsk, for example, had taken suit against its top management because of the continued disparity between their quotas and the amount of raw materials provided to them. A plant in Tyumen also decided to sue the Ministry and refused to sign contracts, knowing its would be unable to deliver it product. MN finally reported that "dozens of enterprises" had resisted "ruinous orders" which were outside of their capabilities.[104] The problems being faced by the cooperative movement were also explored extensively by the paper. It was related that cooperatives were often extorted, and that their workers were repeatedly accused of being "nepmen and kulaks." MN printed letters from its readership labeling the cooperative workers as "swindlers", "speculators", "cheaters and thieves", but the general tone of articles written by journalists was strongly in favor of the initiative and aimed at discrediting the negative popular perceptions of such activities. Despite the impediments, it was stated that the movement was gaining momentum and would eventually overcome "the envy of neighbours... and the resistance of rural bureaucrats."[105] The frankness and detail presented on the pages of MN about crisis in the economy and the often faltering steps taken towards reform constituted a sharp departure from the glowing optimism of 1985 and 1986. It had become increasingly apparent, on the pages of the newspaper, that mere exhortations of 'acceleration' were insufficient.

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[104] MN, No. 6 (Feb. 14-21, 1988) p.8; No. 8 (Feb. 28- March 6, 1988) p. 9; No. 17 (May 1-8, 1988) p.2.

[105] MN, No. 6 (Feb. 14-21, 1988) p.9; No. 10 (March 13-20, 1988) p.13; No. 30 (Sun. July 24, 1988) p.9; No. 47 (Nov. 27- Dec. 4, 1988) pp. 8-9.

As 1988 drew to a close, it was also apparent that political reform - and the coverage that it received - had entered a significantly new phase. Vague references to 'democratization' had been replaced by concrete moves toward institutional change. The role of the press in this process of political reform had also evolved from being merely a reflector of the decisions of the regime, to that of a *perestroika* 'watchdog.' The role was a novel one, particularly for a newspaper that had previously existed solely to extol the virtues of the Soviet state. But although the task was different, it was still largely one dictated from above. The content of *Moscow News* had changed drastically - new topics such as multi-candidate elections, civic rights, the need for a law-based state, and the existence of many negative socio-economic phenomena had emerged. In the realm of economics a similar transition in the terms of debate had occurred. Many of the new ideas and much of the new vocabulary were offensive to conservatives, but MN was still within the limits of *glasnost* embodied in the ideas of the reformists in power. In the years which followed, MN would gradually move outside of these constraints into a sphere of discourse which was not limited by the Party's upper echelon. In many ways, MN's reporting of other events between 1985 and 1986 had already outstripped its own dutiful economic and political coverage.

THE SOVIET WORLDVIEW: DISARMAMENT TO AFGHANISTAN

Following Gorbachev's assumption of power, it rapidly became apparent that his intention of 'restructuring' the Soviet system was accompanied by a desire to restructure the country's foreign relations as well. In Gorbachev's view, the ever-present possibility of nuclear annihilation necessitated a serious reformation of global - particularly superpower - relations. Under the banner of 'new political thinking', the new administration launched a new foreign policy intent on reducing tensions between East and West and entering into a sincere dialogue on disarmament. Eventually, Gorbachev's overtures and the reforms that he instituted proved potent enough to bring a distinctly anti-Communist American administration to the bargaining table. In December of 1987, this rapprochement culminated in the INF Treaty, the first treaty to guarantee the elimination of an entire class of nuclear weapons. In 1989, Soviet troops were pulled out of Afghanistan. The INF Treaty and disengagement in Afghanistan accomplished two crucial objectives - simultaneously alleviating sources of East-West confrontation and defense expenditures. The interdependence of Gorbachev's domestic reforms (*perestroika/glasnost*) and his foreign policy (new political thinking) is undeniable. Without the radical transformations proposed by *perestroika*, and the lessening of secrecy accompanying *glasnost*, Gorbachev would have been unable to gain the confidence of the West essential to improving relations and slowing the arms race. Similarly, it became increasingly apparent that ending the arms race and the war in Afghanistan (and thus allowing the Soviet Union to reduce its

military spending) were indispensable precondition of revitalizing the Soviet economy.[1]

Considering the relative importance of Gorbachev's foreign policy in the larger context of his hopes for domestic reform, it is not surprising that the press would be enlisted to explain and advance the new course. Although it could be argued that the press of any nation tends to reflect that nation's foreign objectives, the direct control of the Soviet press by the Party and state apparatus in the USSR has led many Western analysts to regard Soviet media statements, particularly those of the authoritative organs *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, as equivalent to "foreign policy outputs". That is, it is assumed that the Soviet leadership actively used the media to communicate its perspective not only to Soviet citizens, but also to "outsiders."[2] Although *Moscow News* hardly had the authority and prestige of the central press, as a foreign language paper intended primarily for export, its role as a platform presenting the Soviet perspective on global issues cannot be ignored. The stated mandate of *Moscow News*, displayed prominently on the back page of most issues from 1985 to 1988, was to give "a view from Moscow on present world problems." MN was fundamentally conceived of as a vehicle to forward the Soviet perspective to foreign audiences, and to counteract the views expounded by the West.[3] Although it can be argued that by

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[1] It should be briefly noted here that after the Soviet pull-out, the USSR still rendered substantial aid to the DRA and that the decision to disengage was probably also affected by increasing domestic discontent with the war. These important aspects will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

[2] Robert Axelrod and William Zimmerman, "The Soviet Press on Soviet Foreign Policy" in British Journal of Political Science Vol.11, No.2 (1981) pp.183-184.

[3] It would appear from the content and tone of most issues in 1985 that, before Gorbachev's appointee Yegor Yakovlev took over, MN was aimed primarily at a Third World audience - this can only be an educated guess, but it seems correct considering the amount of articles written about development issues and features focusing on particular countries from the "South"

1987 MN had been reconfigured to increase its domestic appeal, any examination of the paper would be remiss if it did not attempt to illustrate MN's participation in propaganda aimed at advancing Soviet foreign policy objectives as well as the subsequent impact which an expanding *glasnost* would have on its coverage of the war in Afghanistan.

The theme of disarmament, and of the Soviet Union's leading role in the search for world peace was quite obviously the dominant characteristic of MN during the early Gorbachev years - articles on the topic appeared in virtually every issue, overshadowing even its dedicated coverage of plans for domestic reform. It would thus appear that there was a conscious effort by the paper to forward Gorbachev's "new political thinking". Gorbachev announced his intentions to pursue a "Leninist course of peace and peaceful coexistence"[4] in his earliest speeches as General Secretary. That his own interpretation of 'peaceful coexistence' proved equivocal to actively pushing toward nuclear disarmament became clear in the following months. In August 1985, the USSR announced a unilateral moratorium on underground nuclear testing, and in January 1986 the Soviet Union advanced a proposal aimed at the elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Although factions in the West remained suspicious of the 'Soviet threat', three summit meetings between Gorbachev and US President Ronald Reagan slowly ushered in a new era of US-Soviet relations. It must be noted, however, that while some Americans remained skeptical of Soviet

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(particularly India). The secondary audience can probably be assumed to be Eastern Europeans and "communist sympathizers" in the West. Such an assumption is based largely on survey of nationalities of letters-to-the-editor from 1985 -1986.

[4] From a speech by Mikhail Gorbachev given March 11, 1985 reprinted in MN No.11 (Sun. March 17, 1985) p.1.

intentions, the Soviets also retained a less than flattering official-view of the USA - particularly in the Soviet media. Despite diplomatic attempts to reduce hostilities, the overall framework which had dominated Soviet foreign policy coverage maintained its anti-American, anti-capitalist tone well into 1988.

The picture of world affairs painted by MN conformed tightly to the overarching ideology of the state. Socialism, as it was practiced in the USSR, was depicted as the superior system producing a superior society while the West was portrayed as a haven for violence, depravity and injustice. In the realm of international relations, the Soviet Union was invariably on the side of the developing world, advocating disarmament, development, and self-determination and opposing the insidious grip of imperialism and militarism wherever the United States chose to bankroll it. This paradigm of description was expanded to incorporate virtually all events between 1985 and 1987. Even while it was obvious that disarmament had become crucial (overtly - for preventing armagedddon, and covertly - for allowing the Soviet Union to redirect/reduce military spending) - the anti-imperialist tone of foreign affairs coverage was hardly blunted. There may have been a campaign to promote better relations, but little ground was yielded regarding the alleged superiority of socialism as an ideology or system of development.

This interpretive framework with its view of a struggle between East and West was the polar opposite of the corresponding dominant framework in the West wherein the USSR was generally seen as the main threat to international security both in the nuclear arena and in the Third World. Although a certain plurality of opinions existed

in the West (many people, for example, had rejected extreme views of the Soviet Union's aims for expansion), the ideology of the Cold War persisted. Its virulence in the top echelons of American power was loudly testified to by President Reagan's calling the USSR an 'evil empire' - a slip which could be best described as only half-joking.[5] In the West the dominance of one ideology had led to the prevalence, in the mainstream media, of one framework of explanation for international events - that the West must strive to combat the insidious force of communism. In the East, a diametrically opposed ideology dictated an equally exclusive framework of explanation - with the Soviet Union as hero and the United States as enemy. All aspects of global relations were filtered through these paradigms. Although many in the West would argue that the Soviet system's dependence on repression and censorship rendered its media incapable of producing anything but disinformation and propaganda - even the most cursory examination of the Western media would reveal the same type of limitations of 'objectivity' particularly regarding foreign affairs.

It is undeniable that to an often great extent *Moscow News* and other organs of the Soviet media were enlisted to campaign for certain aspects of Soviet foreign policy. However, one should not underestimate the depth of belief that most Soviet journalists and citizens had in the larger framework of interpretation which had been employed to explain distant foreign events to them. Most readers found foreign coverage generally reliable, testifying to the fact that many Soviets sincerely believed that the view of foreign affairs presented to them was fairly 'objective.' In the case of

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[5] *Moscow* News regarded the comment as an example of the anti-Sovietism which had existed "among the governing elites" of the USA and Western Europe since 1917. MN, No. 15 (April 21-28,1985) p.5.

MN, despite the paper's increasingly radical tendencies in its domestic coverage, there is little evidence of any fundamental questioning of the 'Soviet view' of world affairs until 1989. Instead, MN amply illustrated the Soviet interpretation of events in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America - painting a surprisingly convincing picture of the expansionist, destabilizing aims of capitalism.

Despite momentous change in the country's leadership, and the official introduction of *glasnost*, MN's depiction of the international arena remained basically unchanged from 1985 through to 1987. The image of the Soviet Union which MN strove to uphold in 1985 and 1986 was defined partially by its opposition to the image of the West - capitalist societies were noted for their lack of concern for social justice and their inability to prevent destructive social phenomena. Democracy and freedom in the West were portrayed simply as a license for exploitation of the masses and as resulting in the absence of personal safety and morality. This characterization was often advanced in letters to the editor from disgruntled citizens of the West. For example, one such letter from a British reader stated: "We are told in the West that we must defend our freedom. I would like to know what our freedom is? We have massive unemployment, poverty, and misery, drug addicts, etc.. It is not safe to walk the streets.... We have prostitutes, homosexuals and last, but not least AIDS. So we don't have very much to be proud of or defend."[6]

The United States, in particular, was characterized by MN as violent and racist; evidence of the presence of uncontrollable violence in the United States was found in the trial of vigilante Bernhard Goetz: "Goetz's escapade reflected the fear of millions

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[6] MN, No. 49 (Nov. 16-23, 1986) p.2.

of Americans.... People are sick and tired of the authorities' impotence to subdue criminal elements."[7] Meanwhile the American record on human rights and racial equality was fiercely attacked. One article, sensationally titled "Day of the Dead", managed to simultaneously lambaste Americans for their fascination with zombie horror films, accuse the authorities of Philadelphia of bombing a "religious and philosophic community" and report that the Ku Klux Klan had shot five labour leaders with the "blessing"" of the FBI.[8] Other articles discussed the "genocide" of American Indians[9] and argued that all blacks in America were "poor, unemployed and outcast ."[10]

This caustic portrayal of American (and Western) culture tapered off in severity by mid-1986 but did not disappear. In late 1987, a review of a new book written by Vladimir Simonov, What Makes America Tick? countered references to Leonard Peltier, the KKK and the homeless problem with acknowledgment of American achievements such as the artificial heart. However, he noted: "Isn't the existence of potassium cyanide in Tylenol... an American phenomena?" and that "dozens of lunatics fire for hours on end at passersby using the automatic rifles they are perfectly free to buy...."[11] Attacks pinpointing the villainy of American government, and industry (particularly the infamous Military Industrial Complex) continued unabated And, although progressively less and less inflammatory anti-

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[7] MN, No.5 (Feb. 10 - 17, 1985), p.7.
[8] MN, No.31 (Aug. 11 - 18, 1985), p.6.
[9] MN, No. 39 (Sep. 29 - Oct. 6, 1985), p.6.
[10] MN, No. 4 (Feb. 2 - 9, 1986), p.6. (The inflammatory nature of the articles in MN is exemplified in statements like : "Ku Klux Klan crosses are now burning more than at any time in the past...." from the same article.)
[11] MN, No. 46 (Nov. 22 - 29, 1987) p. 7.

Western pieces appeared in 1987 and 1988, a story about a "well known American pop-singer" (named Adeem) moving to Moscow, to keep his son away from pornography, marijuana "as accessible as cigarettes", and "girls at school whose parents have already supplied them with contraceptives, from kidnappers, [and] from white supremacists...." still made it into print in October 1988.[12] Stories that depicted the West in this sensationally negative manner consequently disappeared in 1989, although this silence should not necessarily be assumed to equate acceptance of capitalist culture.

The framework of socialism's superiority and capitalism's depravity also encompassed the issue of disarmament and the arms race. The West, and again particularly the United States, was portrayed as the aggressor, while the Soviet Union was depicted as making every effort to ensure peace. Even in early 1985, before Gorbachev's ascension to power, *Moscow News* had adopted a strong stand in support of disarmament. This is not surprising when one considers that MN at this time was plainly being published for a foreign audience; an audience that had to be convinced of the USSR's goodwill and global concern. A prime illustration of this is MN's coverage of the chemical leak in Bhopal, India in late 1984. Not only did MN lay the blame for the Bhopal tragedy at the feet of capitalism, and particularly transnational corporations, it also explicitly linked the accident to the issue of nuclear disarmament calling Bhopal a "mini-Hiroshima". In MN's opinion, such an example of technology out-of-control, only highlighted the dangers inherent in stockpiling nuclear weapons.[13]

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[12] MN, No. 40 (Oct. 9 - 16, 1988) p.5.
[13] MN, No. 3 (Jan. 27 - Feb. 3, 1985) p. 5.

Konstantin Chernenko was quoted in several issues advocating the limitation, and reduction of nuclear arms: "'Stop the avalanche of armaments'".[14] The US was consistently depicted as unwilling to "conduct serious talks", while the Soviet Union was pushing for disarmament. In February MN reinforced this image, reporting that the USSR had unilaterally renounced first strike, in the hopes of tempting the Americans to the bargaining table.[15] References to the USA's strategic defense initiative (SDI), also preceded Gorbachev's leadership. In one article, which exemplified not only the portrayal of Washington as the aggressor in the arms race but also the sensational, often silly, style of MN reporting in 1985, the author wrote: "Not so long ago the first 'star wars' films appeared in Hollywood. At that time there was a passion... for making such horror films, and people went to see them unsuspecting [sic.] that the idea might be transformed from the screen to the minds of American policy makers."[16]

Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary and his subsequent moves to recreate a détente between the superpowers had an obvious impact on *Moscow News*. The paper assiduously covered the issue - devoting considerable space to the activities of peace activists and publishing numerous features arguing the rationality/necessity of nuclear disarmament. The tone of this reporting was invariably anti-nuclear, and consistently and vehemently opposed to the expansion of the arms race into outer space. Meetings of groups such as the "World Peace Council" and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War received broad publicity from 1985 to

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[14] MN, No. 5 (Feb. 10-27, 1985) p.1; No. 6 (Sun. Feb. 10, 1985) p.1.
[15] MN, No. 7 (Feb. 24 - Mar. 3, 1985) p. 5.
[16] MN, No. 8 (March 3-10, 1985) p.5.

1987.[17] The tone of coverage resounded with Gorbachev's "new political thinking" - proclaiming disarmament to be an absolute imperative in the nuclear age. Titles of articles reflected the need for "A new era mentality." It was emphatically declared that "Security in the nuclear age is possible only as security for all"; and that "The Soviet proposals [for a nuclear-free world by the year 2000] are the triumph of logic."[18] The main target of attack, however, was undoubtedly the American plan to develop a space-defense system.

The Strategic Defensive Initiative, usually referred to as either SDI or 'star wars', was repeatedly lambasted as both "fantastic"[19] and as "a weapon of aggression."[20] SDI was seen as the main impediment to disarmament. Chernenko had been quoted as saying "Today it is impossible to limit, let alone reduce nuclear arms without taking effective measures to prevent the militarization of space."[21] This sentiment was often repeated - particularly after the USA's refusal at Geneva and Reykjavik to stop SDI research.[22] It was even suggested that Washington was

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[17] A few examples of the meetings and demonstrations covered: "World Peace Council in Moscow" MN, No. 13 (April 7-14, 1985) p.1; "Youth Festival: 'May the Young remember Hiroshima'" MN, No. 31 (Aug. 11-18, 1985) p.1; "International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War" MN, No. 51 (Dec. 29, 1985 - Jan. 5,1986) p.3; "Action Week in the Year of Peace" MN, No. 20 (May 21 - June 1, 1986) p.1; "International forum 'For a Nuclear-Free World' to be held in Moscow" (MN, No. 6 (Feb. 15-22, 1987) p.4; "Moscow Forum on Peace" MN, No. 8 (March 1-8, 1987) p.4; "Congress of the 'International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War'" MN, No. 23 (June 14-21, 1987) p.4; World Disarmament Campaign held in Black Sea under UN aegis with Soviet Peace Committee, MN, No. 25 (June 28- July 5, 1987) p. 4; "Peace Walk" MN, No. 26 (July 5-12, 1987) p.1. MN also printed 2 articles about the hungerstrike of US scientist Charles Hyder who was apparently protesting the US 'war machine': MN, No. 10 (March 15-22, 1987) p.5, and MN, No. 11 (March 22-29, 1987) p.5.

[18] MN, No. 4 (Feb. 2-9, 1986) p.5; No. 13 (April 7-14, 1985) p.1; No. 5 (Feb. 9-16, 1985) p.1.

[19] MN, No. 15 (April 21-28, 1985) p.1.

[20] MN, No. 8 (March 3-10, 1985) p. 5.

[21] MN, No. 6 (Sun. Feb. 10, 1985) p.1.

[22] "Space Weapons - a freeway to new danger" MN, No. 29 (July 28- Aug. 4, 1985) p.5; "After Geneva" MN, No. 1 (Jan. 12-19, 1986) p.5; Reykjavik MN, No. 42 (Oct. 26- Nov. 2, 1986) p.1..

refusing to back down on SDI as an excuse to continue the arms race.[23] The development of SDI was portrayed as an act of irrationality which not only contradicted Gorbachev's beliefs about the suicidal nature of the arms race, but also left the world at the mercy of possibly unreliable technology.[24] Occasionally, MN published articles written by Westerners which also attacked the star wars concept. The British writer James Aldridge, for example, wrote a piece titled "Why invent a monster in space?" while an article called "Why the Majority Oppose It" reported American physicists' supposed opposition to SDI.[25] The multitude of articles which MN published on the topic (combined with their consequent disappearance after the signing of the INF Treaty in Washington) suggests not only that SDI posed a real concern to the Soviet Union, but also that MN's role as a propaganda paper had not ended with *glasnost*.[26]

MN's coverage of the path towards disarmament was dominated by one theme: that the USSR was the initiator of peace while the US was the obstructer. Before Gorbachev's appointment, MN reported, for example, that the Soviet Union had unilaterally renounced 'first strike', but that no similar offer had been forthcoming

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[23] MN, No. 46 (Nov. 23-30, 1986) p.7.

[24] "Beyond the Comprehensible" MN, No. 1(Jan. 11-18, 1987) p.5; "A Nanosecond Away From Catastrophe - why we can't rely on SDI computers" MN, No. 32 (Aug. 16-23, 1987) p.6.

[25] MN, No. 8 (March 2-9, 1986) p.7; No. 2 (Jan. 18-25, 1987) p.5. Other articles focusing on Western opinions and the opinions of scientists appear in MN, No.25 (June 30- July 7, 1985) p.5; No. 15 (April 20-27, 1986) p.5; No. 38 (Sept. 28- Oct. 5, 1986) p.7.

[26] It should be clarified that although SDI's strategic potential remains a mystery, the Soviet Union was in no position financially (or possibly technologically) to enter into an arms race in space. The number and tone of the articles suggests that the threat was real enough in at least that sense to require an intense propaganda effort. The quantity of articles is telling, but their consequent disappearance is even more revealing. It can in no way be definitively stated that MN was waging a campaign against SDI, but the evidence is strongly suggestive.

from the Americans.[27] In April 1985, the Soviet Union announced a moratorium on the deployment of medium-range missiles (announced in MN under the headline "Soviet Union again shows goodwill").[28] This was followed first by an offer at the United Nations to ban the use of force in space[29], and later a moratorium on nuclear explosions (testing).[30] Many articles supportive of the moratorium followed and emphasized how disarmament was not only imperative, but also in complete accord with true socialist principles, that "A world without war, without weapons is the ideal of socialism".[31] In January 1986, the Soviets made a proposal for disarmament which envisioned the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. Again, the proposals received copious positive treatment on the pages of *Moscow News*. Issue No. 4 (February 2-9, 1986), for example contained several articles such as "Towards the 21st Century without nuclear arms", "The path to nuclear-free peace. The USSR suggests", and "A new era mentality"[32] All of these articles depicted the Soviet Union as a conciliator. In contrast, the USA was seen as controlled by "militarist quarters" determined to spread the arms race into outer space.[33] American reluctance to renounce first strike, and their guilt in breaking off talks on the prohibition of nuclear weapons testing, were only a prelude to their truly sinister obstructionism.

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[27] MN, No.7 (Feb. 24- March 3, 1985) p.5.

[28] MN, No. 15 (April 21-28, 1985) p.1.

[29] MN, No. 28 (July 21-28, 1985) p. 1. Foreign Minister E. Shevardnadve proposal of the concept of 'star peace' at the United Nations General Assembly was reported in MN No.39 (Sept. 29- Oct. 26, 1985)

[30] The nuclear explosion moratorium made the front page of MN, No. 31 (Aug. 11-18, 1985).

[31] MN, No. 44 (Nov. 3-10, 1985) p. 1. Other articles which appeared: "Gorbachev: moratorium offers real opportunity to stop the arms race" MN, No. 33 (Sun. Aug. 18, 1985) p.3; "Let's make 1986 a year without nuclear explosions" MN, No.52 (Jan. 5-12, 1986) p. 1; "1986 should go down in history as the end of nuclear explosions" MN, No. 1 (Jan. 12-19, 1986) p.1.

[32] MN, No. 4 (Feb. 2-9, 1986) pp. 1, 2, 5. MN, No. 5 (Feb. 9-16, 1986) carried the previously mentioned story, "The Soviet proposals are the triumph of logic" on its front page.

The US rejection of a testing moratorium - "The Soviet moratorium and the American 'No'" and the refusal at Geneva to halt SDI research were attacked virulently.[34] The rebuff of the Soviet programme of January 1986, however, received the most scathing treatment in MN. It was first reported under the headline "Olive Branch spurned" - a phrase which set the tone of later accounts.[35] It should be noted that this announcement was bracketed by two other major events. First, the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger and second, the bombing of Tripoli, Libya by the American Air Force. The Challenger disaster, in keeping with MN's style at the time, was explained in relation to the arms race; the insinuation being that the Challenger had been somehow connected to SDI research. The Pentagon, it was suggested had rushed the schedule and "cloaked" the flight in secrecy, while the politicians had been "keen on using the shuttle programme for propaganda." The explosion, it was argued, disclosed the "lethal danger inherent in the Star Wars programme" - the dependence of all human life on potentially unreliable technology.[36] The Tripoli bombing also revealed the pernicious nature of the American state. Photos of the devastation were printed on the front page of MN under the title "The Style of Terrorism." And US actions were reviled as criminal and self-righteous - "aggressive, arrogant and spitting on the rights of others".[37] Subsequently, MN's approach to superpower relations revealed a heightening in tension. US threats to renege on SALT-2 agreements were indignantly answered. It was emphatically stated that the USSR would not

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[33] MN, No. 1 (Jan. 12-19, 1986) p.1.
[34] MN, No. 1 (Jan. 12-19, 1986) pp. 4, 5.
[35] MN, No. 16 (April 27- May 4) p.1.
[36] MN, No. 6 (Feb. 16-13, 1986) pp.1-3.
[37] MN, No. 17 (May 4-11, 1986) pp. 1, 6.

"impartially watch as the United States breaks agreements", but would consider itself free from relevant commitments if such breeches were made.[38] Lack of progress towards disarmament was blamed on the "undisguised obstruction of the American administration."[39] In September, MN quoted the General Secretary as saying that American "military-political practices suggest... they want to legalize the arms race, this is... the material and psychological preparation of world war."[40] It was in this atmosphere of tension that the two superpowers approached the summit meeting at Reykjavik.

Despite some harsh words, MN continued to assert that the USSR was willing and eager to proceed with disarmament. Gorbachev unilaterally extended the testing moratorium and declared his readiness to sign an agreement to make this a bilateral step.[41] Gorbachev's ideas about "new political thinking" were published repeatedly- "today it is simply suicidal to be building interstate relations based on illusions of achieving superiority in terrible weapons of annihilation."[42] The failure to produce an agreement in Reykjavik was again attributed to American unwillingness to compromise.[43] Late 1986, however, saw a quite radical innovation in MN's handling of the disarmament issue. In December, MN published an uncensored article written by American historian Richard Pipes, a well known anti-Soviet figure, presenting the US position on the proposed test-ban. Pipes argued that such a ban would have an

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[38] MN, No. 23 (June 15-22, 1986) p. 1.
[39] MN, No. 27 (July 13-20, 1986) p.1.
[40] MN, No. 37 (Sept. 21-28, 1986) p.1.
[41] MN, No. 34 (Aug. 31- Sept. 7, 1986) p.1; No. 35 (Sept. 7-14, 1986) p.1.
[42] MN, No. 34 (Aug. 31- Sept. 7, 1986) p. 3.
[43] MN, No. 42 (Oct. 26- Nov. 2, 1986) p.1; No. 46 (Nov. 23-30, 1986) pp., 7.

adverse effect on the quality of the US deterrent and that the difficulty in verifying Soviet compliance made such an agreement untenable. Pipes wrote further that there was "widespread feeling in the US that the Soviet Union exploits the... emotionally appealing slogan of a testing moratorium for its own purposes" and that the Soviets were using the issue of SDI in order to avoid talks on the verifiable arms reduction. The mere fact that Pipes' view were published constituted a remarkable break in MN's foreign affairs coverage. Moreover, Pipes' interpretation provides an interesting contrast to that previously presented in MN. His comments, of course, did not go unanswered. A response article appeared, as well, wherein G. Gerasimov (former editor-in-chief) asserted simply that "R. Pipes simply doesn't want to stop the arms race because he hates the Soviet system... and because he wishes its demise."[44] So, while the publication of an opposing view constituted an abrupt break from past policy, it was still immediately refitted into the overall framework - as an example, perhaps, of the devious means of American obstructionism.

The theme continued in 1987. A commentary published in April stated, for example, that: "The USSR came forward with important initiatives whereas the American side demonstrated its practical unpreparedness to discuss them in substance."[45] Another, printed in July, contended that since the advent of 'new political thinking': "Moscow has been forthcoming. The United States has not."[46] Finally in September a meeting between Shevardnadze and US Secretary of State, George Shultz, yielded an agreement in principle for arms reduction. In MN, it was

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[44] MN, No. 49 (Dec. 14-21, 1986) p.5.
[45] MN, No. 17 (Sun. April 26, 1987) p.3.
[46] MN, No. 28 (July 19-26, 1987) p.3.

hailed as the "first major result" of 'new political thinking'.[47] This positive step seemed to result both in a disappearance of hostile attacks on America's 'obstructionism' as well as a tremendous decline in the number of articles about peace and disarmament. The signing of the INF Treaty in December 1987 received much fanfare,[48] but generally coverage of the topic lessened dramatically. By 1988, MN was no longer dominated by peace and disarmament propaganda.

Despite the obvious importance of reaching an agreement with the West to end the arms race, Soviet criticism of Western foreign policy was unceasing. In the case of MN, the paradigm of confrontation which was used to explain global events remained intact regardless of the progress of the disarmament negotiations. Conflicts in Latin America, southern Africa and the Middle East were described in a context wherein capitalist imperialism were clearly defined as the key aggressor and culprit. In 1985 and 1986, MN dedicated at least two pages per issue to "World" news. On these pages a distinct portrait was being painted; the United States, driven by capitalist greed and imperial ambitions, was seeking to exploit the Third World and subvert the sovereignty of all states. There existed a sinister alliance between the US, Israel and South Africa. The relationship between disarmament and development was also emphasized, as was the capitalist world's complicity in creating and benefiting from the debt crisis in the developing world.[49] Great efforts were made to highlight the

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[47] MN, No. 39 (Oct. 4-11, 1987) pp. 1,5.

[48] "Renunciation of Nuclear Arms is a Sign of the Maturity of Humankind" MN, No. 46 (Nov. 22-29, 1987) p.6; "Hour of Triumph" MN, No. 49 (Sun. Dec. 6, 1987) p.1; "A Great Step towards the Future" MN, No. 50 (Dec. 20-27, 1987) p.1.

[49] "Cashing In On Other's Misfortune" MN, No. 7 (Feb. 24- March 3, 1985) p.6; "20th-century Usurers" MN, No. 15 (April 21-28, 1985) p.6; "The Debt Trap" No. 32 (Aug. 18-25, 1985) p.5; "Non-alignment, peace, development." MN, No. 35 (Sept. 8-15, 1985) p.6; "Neocolonialism: instead of trading in slaves, it trades in loans on exorbitant interest: MN, No. 8

Soviet Union's friendship with the non-aligned states - particularly India.[50] In late 1986, MN quoted Gorbachev: "We regard the non-aligned movement... as a mighty force confronting war and aggression, imperialism, colonization and racism...."[51] This statement encapsulated the Soviet view of the world contained in *Moscow News* from 1985 to 1988.

The civil war in Angola between the communist MPLA government (aided by Cuba and the Soviet Union) and UNITA rebels (backed by the United States and South Africa) was an often discussed topic on MN's "World" page in 1985 and 1986. The conflict was explained wholly within the accepted paradigm. South Africa was seen to be "waging an undeclared war" using gangs of "bandits" against Angola (and Mozambique).[52] UNITA bands were on "the payroll of the racists," while the US was backing South African military attacks on Angola and the "puppet government" in Namibia - "Officially, Washington's hatred for people's Angola is no secret."[53] Washington's "cherished goal" was to topple the lawful government of Angola, and to that end Washington had agreed to spend $300 million to support Jonas Savimbi, "Pretoria's man", and UNITA's "terrorist operations against the legitimate regime in Luanda."[54] The actual situation was , of course, more complicated than the

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(March 2-9, 1986) p. 6; "Africa in Chancery" & "Disarmament and Development" MN, No. 22 (June 8-15, 1986) pp. 5, 7; "Conference on Relationship between Disarmament and Development" MN, No. 36 (Sept. 13-20, 1987) p.3.

[50] "Soviet Indian Friendship" MN, No. 3 (Jan. 27- Feb. 3, 1985) p.7; "USSR-India together into the 21st Century" MN, No. 22 (June 9-16, 1985) p.1; "Soviet-Indian Friendship" MN, No. 4 (Feb. 2-9, 1986) p.7; "Month of Soviet-Indian Friendship" MN, No. 33 (Sun. Aug. 17, 1986) p.3; Gorbachev visits Delhi reported in MN, No. 49 (Dec. 14-21, 1986) p.1; "Festival of India in the USSR underway" MN, No. 28 July 17-24, 1987) p.1..

[51] MN, No. 36 (Sept. 13-20, 1986) p.1.

[52] MN, No. 13(April 7-14, 1985) p.5.

[53] MN, No. 25 June 30- July 7, 1985) p. 6.

[54] MN, No. 42 (Oct. 20-27, 1985) p. 7; No. 6 (Feb. 16-23, 1986) p.6.

description given by MN. Although it is undeniable that UNITA was being backed by both the US and, to an extent, South Africa; the 'legitimacy' and 'lawfulness' of the MPLA regime was not as apparent as the articles would lead one to assume. Still, on the whole, MN was no more biased than most American newspapers on the topic. MN's criticism of South Africa's efforts to destabilize the front-line states and to continue its "genocidal policies" within its own borders was vociferous.[55] Although this reporting may have contradicted Western ideals of journalist objectivity in style, it cannot be seen as wholly inaccurate.

MN's treatment of Israeli "aggression" against the Arab states was equally rabid. Israel was repeatedly accused of aggression, expansionism, terrorism, and brutal violence in its dealings with the Lebanese and Palestinians.[56] The United States and Israel were portrayed as partners in aggression - since the Middle East had become "a key target for the aggressive American doctrine of neoglobalism."[57] The US, it was argued, needed "Israel armed to the teeth and capable of threatening all Arab states in order to impose 'peace the American way' on them by blackmail and force, that is, to establish American military political control over the entire Middle East."[58] To this end, the US and South Africa had helped Israel create a secret nuclear arsenal.[59] Even early in 1988, MN continued to report Israeli atrocities and to blame "militarist thinking" in the US, for Washington's policy of confrontation in the Middle

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[55] MN, No. 8 (March 2-9, 1986) p.3.

[56] MN, No. 9 (Sun. March 3, 1985) p.6; No. 14 (April 14-21, 1985); No. 16 (April 28- May 5, 1985) p.6; No. 1 (Jan. 12-19, 1986) p. 7; No. 13 (April 6-13, 1986), p.6; No. 4 (Jan. 31- Feb. 7, 1988) p.6; No. 9 (March 6-13, 1988) p.3.

[57] MN, No. 23 (June 15-22, 1986) p.6.

[58] MN, No. 7 (Feb. 24 - March 3, 1985) p.6.

[59] MN, No. 18 (May 11-18, 1986) p.7.

East.[60] Thus again, while one may object to the interpretation of Israeli and American actions, there is little in the facts presented which is objectionable. In fact, many Westerners would fully concur with MN's condemnations of Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and Lebanon as was repeatedly demonstrated by the USA and Israel's isolation in the Uniited Nations in the late eighties.

By 1987, however, it was becoming apparent that *Moscow News* was reducing its focus on international issues and concentrating more heavily on the domestic upheaval of the Soviet Union. The "World" page disappeared, and although peace and disarmament still regularly made the front page, articles on Latin America, the Middle East and Africa became less common. This is not to suggest that the overarching paradigm had changed. In the case of Nicaragua, for example, while colorful phrases such as "undeclared war", "Somozan terrorists" and "Reagan administration mercenaries" faded from the pages,[61] MN continued to assert that the Contra movement was "invented by the Reagan administration",[62] that the Americans' only interest in Latin America was to pursue the Monroe Doctrine; and that the Soviet Union had always "sympathized with the Latin American people fighting for their economic and political independence."[63] Thus it is apparent that although *glasnost* was gradually expanding, and MN seemed less virulently anti-American in outlook,

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[60] MN, No. 8 (Feb. 28- March 6, 1988) p.5.

[61] Such phrases appeared in a multitude of articles in 1985 and 1986, including: MN, No. 9 (Sun, March 3, 1985) p.6; No. 10 (Sun. March 10, 1985) p.3; No. 12 (March 31- April 17, 1985) p.7; No. 14 (April 14-21) p. 6; No. 18 (May 12-19, 1985) p. 1; No. 24 (June 23-30, 1985) p.6; No.33 (Sun. Aug. 18, 1985) p.6; No. 37 (Sept. 22-29, 1985) p. 6; No. 12 (March 30 - April 6, 1986) p. 6; No. 22 (June 8-15, 1986) p. 1; No. 29 (July 27 - Aug. 3, 1986); No.32 (Aug. 17-24, 1986) p.6; No. 39 (Oct. 5-9, 1986) p.7.

[62] MN, No.16 (April 26- May 3, 1987) p.5.

[63] MN, No. 44 (Nov. 6-13, 1988) p.3.

the basic explanations of international events had not fundamentally changed by 1988. As commentator Alexander Bovin noted, despite the toning down of anti-American rhetoric the change in foreign affairs reporting was "minimal": "There is no objective, full information. There is no serious wise analysis."[64] The gradual move towards the real change Bovin craved was most striking in MN's coverage of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.

Aside from disarmament, the Soviet Union's most pressing foreign policy concern in the eighties was the ongoing war in Afghanistan where Soviet troops had been engaged in an "internationalist struggle" since 1979. During this period of entanglement Soviet media coverage had "evolved from silence to heroic anecdotes of selfless internationalism."[65] Afghanistan had long been a taboo topic, but by 1985 references to the war were appearing which acknowledged Soviet involvement. As Marie Broxup argued, the number of casualties returning from the war had forced the media to account for their existence. Unlike the distant events in Nicaragua and South Africa, which had little tangible effect on the Soviet population, the war in Afghanistan (and its visible consequences) was becoming an undeniable reality for the Soviet people. To continue to ignore the situation would have gravely jeopardized the press' credibility.[66]

In 1985 and 1986 MN frankly reported the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The war and Soviet involvement, however, were rationalized within the

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[64] MN, No.17 (May1-8, 1988) p.8.
[65] Donald Mahoney, RL 337/87, p.1.
[66] Marie Broxup, "Afghanistan According to Soviet Sources, 1980-1985" in Central Asian Survey Vol.7, No. 2/3 (1988), pp. 197-199.

larger paradigm of the global struggle against imperialism. One article, which sought to explain the need for Soviet involvement, asserted that a "limited contingent" of Soviet troops was active in Afghanistan at the invitation of the government of the DRA (Democratic Republic of Afghanistan) in order to help "repulse foreign intervention." This "internationalist assistance" was necessary because Afghanistan had become the target of foreign aggression - the rightful authority was being threatened by "bands of mercenaries" coming from bases in Pakistan, Iran and China and funded and armed by the USA, Saudi Arabia, Israel and China.[67] MN consistently described Washington as the key aggressor, while Pakistan had become "the tool of US aggressive policy in... South Asia."[68] Together, the two countries were waging an "undeclared war" on the people of Afghanistan. Moreover, MN noted the Americans stubbornly "persisted in calling the war 'humanitarian aid' and the armed bandits fighting against their nation 'freedom fighters'."[69] MN staunchly rebutted Western charges that the Soviets were harming civilians, and instead accused US "mercenaries" of commiting such atrocities.[70] Despite the announcement of a limited withdrawal of Soviet troops in mid-1986, no change in this over-arching paradigm of explanation occurred. The pull-out itself was described in heroic terms and it was asserted that the Soviet soldiers "who gave their lives for the freedom... of the DRA" would not be forgotten. Although there was a tacit admission that the Soviets had suffered losses and setbacks, and that the USSR wanted to disengage its forces, the fundamental

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[67] MN, No. 8 (March 3-10, 1985) p.6.
[68] MN, No. 2 (Jan. 20-27, 1985) p.6.
[69] MN, No. 4 (Feb. 3-10, 1985) p.6.
[70] MN, No. 47 (Dec. 1-8, 1985) p. 9; No. 30 (Aug. 3-10, 1986) p. 6.

explanation for Soviet involvement remain unchanged. The USSR's actions were aimed at protecting the sovereignty of an independent state and at "defending the revolutionary gains of its people."[71] It was a necessary response to the US administration's "general policy of neoglobalism."[72]

By 1987, the Soviet Union's desire to extricate itself from Afghanistan was becoming apparent. MN's coverage of the limited withdrawal of 1986 was followed by articles which emphasized the viability of a political settlement which would allow further Soviet disengagement. The efforts of the DRA towards national reconciliation (including a general amnesty) were particularly heralded.[73] The aggression of the US and Pakistan, however, continued to be depicted as the main obstacle in reaching such a settlement.[74] Nevertheless, although the general reasons for Soviet involvement remained unchallenged, the impact of *glasnost* on MN's coverage of Afghanistan was becoming evident. In February, a commentary by Y. Ambartsumov appeared which openly addressed some rather volatile reasons for a Soviet withdrawal. One of the main reasons given by Ambartsumov was that a quick return of Soviet troops would keep "our boys" alive. Although previous articles had acknowledged Soviet casualties, Ambartsumov's was the first article printed by MN to list these deaths as a reason for withdrawal. The piece also directly raised the question of the price of internationalist aid: "[W]e would be able to release additional forces and means which

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[71] MN, No. 22 (June 8-15, 1986) p.7.
[72] MN, No. 51 (Dec. 28- Jan. 4, 1986) p.1.
[73] MN, No.2 (Jan. 18-25, 1987) p.4; No.4 (Sun. Jan. 25, 1987) p.4; No.7 (Feb. 27- March 1, 1987) p.6; No.25 (June 28- July 5, 1987) p.6.
[74] MN, No.7 (Feb. 27- March 1, 1987) p.6; No.15 (April 19-26, 1987) p.5; No.21 (Sun. May 24, 1987) p.5; No.25 (June 28- July 5, 1987) p.6.

are so needy for our economy." Ambartsumov also indirectly criticized official justifications against an early disengagement, arguing that the US would not rush to fill the vacuum since they were uninterested in "another 'Vietnam'."[75] The positive portrayal of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan which had long been advanced in the press, was gradually beginning to fade. In late 1986, MN had declared "Our people will never forget the Soviet soldiers who gave their lives for the freedom... of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan,"[76] but one year later it would declare that the surviving veterans were being forgotten. In a story headlined, "Afghanistan Veterans: Society Owes Them", MN reported the hardships faced by the young soldiers returning home.[77] Not only were pensions and jobs difficult to obtain, but those who were injured were receiving sub-standard care. Such an attack made in the press testified to the degree of change that the paper had already undergone.

While MN's coverage of other Third World issues tapered off in 1988, substantially more articles about Afghanistan appeared: Articles which reflected the impact which *glasnost* was having on the Soviet media; articles that increasingly questioned the 'official' interpretation of the crisis. In early 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would be withdrawing its troops as of May 15, 1988. Most of the articles in MN concerning the withdrawal were not overly critical maintaining that Soviet interference had been necessary and just. Gradually, however, the stories began to delve deeper and tackle more controversial issues. One piece

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[75] MN, No.5 (Feb. 8-15, 1987) p.3.

[76] MN, No. 43 (Nov. 2-9, 1986) p.1.

[77] MN, No. 50 (Dec 20-27, 1987) p.13. MN was not the first to appeal for better treatment for Afghan veterans (*Literaya Gazeta*, Oct. 14, 1987, p.14 - CDSP Vol.39, No. 48, p.5) but it preceded *Izvestia's* appeal by five months (May 9, 1988, p.3 - CDSP Vol.40, No.19, p.11)

printed in April 1988, for instance, questioned the real popularity of the Soviet supported DRA government.[78] In June, MN actually went the inordinate length of publishing casualty and mortality figures of Soviet troops in the war (13 310 killed, 35 478 wounded) and, furthermore, broached the topic of Soviet MIAs.[79] Subsequent editions pursued this story, discussing not only Soviet efforts to retrieve Soviet POWs from Pakistan, but also the rather embarrassing possibility that some of those who went missing in Afghanistan had, in fact, defected to the West. One article even acknowledged that this phenomenon was potentially attributable to the stigma attached to POWs by Stalin.[80] The perspective adopted on these matters were generally conciliatory towards the soldiers. In late 1988 MN ran a column entitled "Letters from Afghanistan" which promised views that "do not feature in official communications." One writer stated emphatically, "[M]ost of them [soldiers] are depressed by this war since it's not doing us any good and... too many people are getting killed." Moreover, another contributer testified to the "tremendous popular support" which the Afghan opposition actually enjoyed.[81]

By 1989, a true openness and honesty about international affairs became evident in *Moscow News* - for the first time the paper dared to breach the paradigm and admitted that the USSR was not the infallible champion it had once claimed to be. At the first Congress of People's Deputies the question was raised of which

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[78] MN, No. 13 (April 3-10, 1988) p. 3.

[79] MN, No. 22 (June 5-12, 1988) p. 2.

[80] MN, No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p. 5; No. 26 (July 3-10, 1988) p. 5; No. 29 (Sun. July 17, 1988) p. 4; No. 31 (Aug 7-14, 1988) p.4. This story, about one soldier who had first fled to Canada, but was now returning to the USSR, also acknowledged the influence of drug addiction on the troops in Afghanistan.

[81] MN, No.51 (Dec. 25, 1988 - Jan. 1, 1989) p.12.

"mechanism" allowed for the deployment of Soviet troops to Afghanistan in 1979 - MN addressed this issue in July. The paper published a series of notes written in 1980 which had potentially been available to the Central Committee and the KGB which asserted that: "By bringing troops into Afghanistan our policy apparently went beyond the admissible bounds of confrontation in the Third World. The benefits from this action turned out to be insignificant compared with the damage caused to our interests."[82] The publication of this material was a breakthrough in foreign affairs coverage on several levels. Most obviously, it constituted an admission that Soviet policy towards Afghanistan was ill-conceived. But, it also contained the open admission that the Soviet Union was actively pursuing a course of *confrontation* with the United States in the Third World, as well as insinuating that the primary goal of Soviet foreign policy, far from being the extension of either social justice or socialism, was self-interest. In the same issue, under the banner "We Should tell the Whole Truth About This War", MN summed up its argument by quoting a veteran of the campaign: "I think the country needed neither that war nor that victory."[83]

Other issues of foreign policy met with a frank re-examination as well. The collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 drew the candid remark, "It is an ugly symbol of a divided Europe, a divided world, confrontation, the cold war, but primarily it attested to our own and our allies' fear of the free movement of people and ideas. A symbol of feudal socialism."[84] While the disintegration of communism in Eastern Europe had been treated cautiously, the collapse of those regimes was hailed

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[82] MN, No. 30 (Sun. July 23, 1989) p.9.
[83] MN, No. 30 (Sun. July 23, 1989) p.9.
[84] MN, No. 47 (Sun. Nov. 19, 1989) p.6.

in December 1989 as "a genuine revolution" aimed not against socialism, but rather at "despotism and corruption."[85] Meanwhile, on the topic of foreign aid and the Third World, MN posed cutting queries as to the prudence of its use asserting that "It's no secret that many Third World recipients of Soviet aid are notorious for their authoritarian... methods of rule... a ruthless suppression of opposition and for corruption." The same article cited Western sources which estimated that the USSR accounted for 28% of the world's arms trade, levied criticism for allowing countries such as Ethiopia and Angola to accumulate "billions of roubles of debt" and argued that in the end Soviet 'assistance' had only contributed to the "deformation of their political development."[86] It was apparent that by the end of 1989 *glasnost* had made a fundamental impact on the nature of foreign affairs reporting on the pages of MN.

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[85] MN, No. 49 (Sun. Dec. 3, 1989) pp.8-9.
[86] MN, No. 49 (Sun. Dec. 3, 1989) p. 6.

1986:
CHERNOBYL, DISASTERS AND OTHER FORBIDDEN TOPICS

If *glasnost* was originally conceived of as a limited openness, applicable only to topics where greater honesty would aid the progress of *perestroika*, the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986 proved the first serious test of those limits.[1] As David Marples, one of the preeminent Western authorities on the Chernobyl disaster, noted: "Chernobyl [was] not part of the *glasnost* campaign."[2] Initially forced into disclosure by extensive international coverage, the Soviet authorities would have undoubtedly preferred to retain control of the dissemination of information about the entire incident. Soviet reports which followed generally sought to counter Western attacks by advancing the official Soviet view.[3] In terms of the media, Chernobyl was a pivotal moment. Once forced into admission, initial Soviet reports exemplified *glasnost* as a campaign - the controlled release of a certain view and acceptable information. However, the magnitude of the accident proved catalytic. Gradually, some Soviet papers, including *Moscow News* became critical of the authorized version of events. Questions arose in the press about the general safety of the Soviet nuclear industry and, ultimately, about the desirability of nuclear energy overall. On a wider scale, Chernobyl marked a drastic change in the nature of Soviet news coverage of other negative phenomena, such as disasters, accidents and environmental crises,

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[1] David Wedgewood Benn described Chernobyl as a "turning point" helping to cause the the widening of glasnost and it redirection toward political reform. "*Glasnost'* and the Media," in Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics, p.183.

[2] David R. Marples, The Social Impact of the Chernobyl Disaster (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press), p.126.

[3] Marples, p.126.

which previously rarely appeared in the Soviet media. Major accidents and disasters may have been noted before, but never in detail and usually only with reassurances of a positive outcome.

In 1985 and early 1986, MN contained articles on only two major incidents - the trapping of a Soviet research vessel near Antarctica and a major earthquake in Tajikistan. The plight of the *Mikhail Somov* appeared in a story in late June, although it was admitted that the ship had been trapped in the ice since March. The bad news was countered with good since, it was reported, an icebreaker was enroute to rescue the stranded crew. Moreover, the readers were reassured in a separate article, that life aboard the *Mikhail Somov* was going on "as usual." A four month silence on the story followed, but in the beginning of November it was reported that the ship was on its way home after having drifted for 133 days without fuel.[4] No other information about the causes of the crisis or details about the rescue appeared in MN. A force 8 earthquake in Tajikistan in October received barely more attention than the plight of the research ship. Four issues of MN, contained reports on the earthquake - the first of which was published 2 weeks after the quake itself. The force of the quake was admitted, as were the facts that people were left homeless, there were casualties and that damage ran into the millions of roubles. A first report of 8,000 homeless was subsequently updated to 29,000, but MN printed no casualty figures, nor did it directly acknowledge any deaths. The 'bad news' was again countered with reassurances that "All the top officials... were in a hurry to get to the disaster area", and that "the whole

[4] MN, No. 24 (June 23-30, 1985) p.3; No. 25 (June 30- July 7, 1985) p.3; No. 43 (Oct. 27-Nov. 3, 1985) p.1.

country came to the rescue." Published photos showed not devastation, but happy, smiling construction workers leaving for Tajikistan.[5] Although both of these incidents occurred after the introduction of *glasnost*, neither reverberates with real openness. It was the same kind of limited coverage which marked the initial coverage of the Chernobyl disaster.

In the national media, the news of Chernobyl appeared on April 29, 1986.[6] Initial reports in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* of a "damaged" reactor and the limited release of radiation became more detailed only after Western reports of massive radiation and thousands of casualties began to appear.[7] The first detailed 'on-site' reports appeared in *Pravda* and *Izvestia* on May 6 coinciding with the release of a TASS communiqué criticizing the Western media of using the incident for "unseemly political purposes."[8] In *Moscow News*, the first mention of the Chernobyl accident occurred in the May 11-18 issue and appeared under the headline "Poisoned cloud of anti-Sovietism."[9] This first account stated that 2 people had been killed and 197 hospitalized, but its focus was to emphasize, first, that it had been an accident and, secondly, that Western media reports were exaggerating the severity of the situation. The retaliation was swift.

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[5] MN, No. 43 (Oct. 27- Nov. 3, 1985) p.1 [It is perhaps interesting to note that MN's first coverage of the quake shared the front page with the story about the **rescue** of the *Mikhail Somov*]; MN, No. 45 (Nov. 10-17, 1985) p.1; No. 46 (Nov. 24- Dec. 1, 1985) p.12; No. 52 (Jan. 5-12, 1986) p.12.

[6] *Pravda Ukrainy*, April 29, 1986.

[7] *Pravda*, April 30, 1986, p.2; *Izvestia*, May 1, 1986 p.2.

[8] *Pravda*, May 6, 1986, p. 6 [CDSP, Vol. 38, No.17, p.1]; TASS communique reprinted in *Pravda*, May 5, 1986, p.2 & *Izvestia*, May 6, 1986, p.1. [CDSP, Vol.38, No. 18, p.1].

[9] MN, No. 18 (May 11-18, 1986) p.1. Since MN is a weekly and has a production lag of some kind, it is hard to determine the real delay in coverage. It is conceivable that there could have been some indication of the disaster in one of the two preceding issues, which ideally would have come out on May 5 and May 12, but there is no way to verify that this was a real possibility. The story in the No.18 issue, moreover, made no pretense of 'breaking' the news. In fact, the article seemed to assume a prior knowledge of the incident.

First, it was noted that 151 "other such accidents" had happened in 14 other countries between 1971 and 1984. Second, it was stated that, "The Soviet public and press are noting with growing indignation the immensely blown-up and morbid hullabaloo... raised by the official circles and mass media of the USA and other NATO countries." This "hullabaloo" was described as a "premeditated", "well-organized" bid to damage East-West relations with "miasmas of anti-Soviet hysteria" which would "hide the chain of crimes committed by the US and NATO militarism against peace and the security of nations." The attempt to describe the Western reaction in terms of militarist obstructionism again illustrated MN's tendency to explain foreign events within a Soviet Cold War paradigm. Gorbachev's official reaction also reflected the desire to turn the Chernobyl accident into further evidence of the need for 'new political thinking' and disarmament.[10] For the first weeks, MN, like other Soviet papers focused on the sensationalism of Western accounts, and maintained that the situation, although serious, was under control.[11]

From May to August, MN sustained a cautious optimism. The front page of the No.20 issue ran the headline: "Chernobyl: the main danger is over, but there is still much to do", beneath which it was asserted that the entire population in the 30km zone (despite it being still possible to live within that area) had been "evacuated quickly and in an organized manner" and that no one had been exposed to a high level of radiation.[12] Two articles within this issue downplayed the accident, while a third

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[10] The USSR's decision to extend its moratorium on nuclear testing was announced under the title "Chernobyl lessons" - MN, No. 21 (June 1-8, 1986) p.1.

[11] Western accounts were indeed often fantastic - see Marples, 125.

[12] MN, No. 20 (May 21- June 1, 1986) p.1.

confirmed that two people had died initially, 204 had been exposed to radiation, and that (as of May 12) 35 remained in serious condition while six more had died. It was denied that the Soviet Union was withholding information about the accident. Comparisons were made with the Challenger disaster (an incident where the US government had not been immediately forthcoming with information either) and with the Bhopal cyanide leak which, it was noted, caused the suffering of hundreds of thousands (while Chernobyl had killed only two). A chronicle of atomic accidents in other countries, including the USA, Britain, Canada and the FRG, was also included.[13] Subsequent issues informed MN readers about Gorbachev's TV address, the work of US bone-marrow specialist Robert Gale, details of fighting the fire, first-hand accounts of the accident, and the attention being paid to Kiev's water supply.[14]

A detailed "Chronicle of the Accident", accompanied by a photo of the damaged unit, appeared in MN, No.22 (June 8-15, 1986): this timeline of the days from April 26 until May 26 revealed quite a bit about the disaster and the evacuation of Pripyat. It was noted that a steam explosion led to the destruction of the reactor and the venting of radioactive materials into the atmosphere. The fire, which was fought by 28 men, was extinguished at around 5 a.m. on April 26. The evacuation of the 30 km zone began the next day, April 27, at 2 p.m. (it took two hours and 45 minutes to evacuate 40 000 city dwellers); a total of 92 000 evacuees received "gratuitous aid." Over 1300 physicians and medical personnel arrived. The reactor was sealed with 5000 tons of sand, lead, dolomite and boron. By May 5, the radiation

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[13] MN, No. 20 (May 21- June 1, 1986) p.5.

[14] MN, No. 21 (June 1-8, 1986) pp. 3, 10; No. 22 (June 8-15, 1986) pp.8-9; No. 23 (June 15-22, 1986) pp. 1-2; No. 25 (June 29- July 6, 1986) p.3.

levels had dropped "two- to three- fold" and by May 10 the emission of radioactivity had "practically stopped." By May 14, seven people were dead (including six of the 28 firefighters) and 299 people had been hospitalized with "various degrees of radiation sickness." It was further asserted that more than 220 000 people had undergone special medical checkups, but that no person living nearby was hospitalized - the hospitalized included only APS workers and those who had participated in "eliminating the accident." In comparison with Western versions this chronicle was generally accurate although it avoided mentioning any possible cause for the sudden increase in steam which triggered the accident. Such explanations would come later.[15] MN soon informed its readers that the death toll had risen to 19; it also reported that precautions to stay inside were not necessary, that outside of "close proximity" to the accident site radiation levels had never threatened human health.[16]

An explanation of the causes of the disaster was first advanced by MN in August, 1986 (about 3 months after the explosion) roughly coinciding with the detailed report given by the Soviet authorities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna.[17] The accident had been caused by "gross violations of operating rules" - the Chairman of State Atomic Energy Inspection, two Deputy Ministers and the Deputy Director of Research and Development had been dismissed, the Minister of Power Industry had been punished and the former Director of Chernobyl had been expelled from the Party.[18] One month later a more complete

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[15] MN, No. 22 (June 8-15, 1986) p.8. *Izvestia* (May 5, 1986) did the same. For comparison see Victor G. Snell's "Introduction: The Cause of the Chernobyl Accident" in Marples, pp. 1-24.
[16] MN, No. 23 (June 15-22, 1986) pp. 1-2.
[17] Snell's "Introduction" in Marples, p.1.
[18] MN, No. 30 (Aug. 3-10, 1986) p. 1.

assessment appeared under the heading "Chernobyl - tragedy of six errors." The accident was attributed to human error, the experiment conducted on April 26 was "wrongly conceived and incorrectly organized" and a "chain" of errors had led to the emergency protection systems being shut off. It was also stated, however, that although the concept of safety needed reconsideration, the accident was not due to technical imperfections or the "low reliability of... protective systems... as it was often said in the Western press...."[19] A new casualty figure was soon published - 29 dead and 299 hospitalized; the initial economic loss was estimated to be close to two billion roubles.[20] To this point. MN's handling of the Chernobyl disaster conformed to the official Soviet account.

Opinions about the relative openness varied. Some would say that the disaster "exposed Soviet secrecy at its worst,"[21] while others would argue that a great deal was revealed about the accident, albeit gradually. It is undeniable that the amount of information released about the tragedy exceeded traditional Soviet disclosures about accidents and disasters. However, it is equally indisputable that the initial secrecy which surrounded the incident (i.e., in the days and hours following the explosion) posed a serious danger to those living and working in the area and betrayed a complete lack of *glasnost* at the practical level.[22] As for *glasnost* in the media , ultimately, most of the Soviet press acquiesced in the line dictated by Moscow, although there were

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[19] MN, No. 35 (Spet. 7-14, 1986) p. 3.
[20] MN, No. 39 (Oct. 5-12, 1986) p. 8.
[21] Benn, "*Glasnost* and the Media", p.183.
[22] Mary Dejevsky, "*Glasnost* and the Soviet Press" in Culture and the Media in the USSR Today (London: Macmillan, 1989). Marples.

exceptions.[23] As conflicting and critical information filtered out - in isolated press reports and through other less-official avenues - Chernobyl contributed to a transformation of *glasnost* itself. 'Openness' became less of a policy applied to a pre-determined set of topics and more a new freedom to explore alternative explanations.

In the pages of *Moscow News,* an article entitled "Forget Chernobyl" launched its first attack on the official account of the evacuation of Pripyat and the 30km zone. Dmitry Kazutin's interview with A. Illesh, a journalist who had recently written a book about the tragedy, revealed the contrast between those who caused and complicated the disaster and those who struggled and sacrificed to control it: "A hero and a marauder appeared on the tragic Chernobyl stage. And it was also the scene of a collision between duty and ignorance, duty and irresponsibility." Kazutin and Illesh castigated the authorities for failing in their obligation to warn and inform the residents of Pripyat. The city authorities were described as having been "stricken with anaemia." One of the goals of *perestroika* had been to give more power to the local Soviets; Chernobyl illustrated that no real transformation had occurred. In doing so it had wrecked the illusion that the reforms were proceeding unhindered, but it had exemplified the absolute imperative not only for decentralization but also for greater openness, independence and responsibility.[24]

MN's follow up features, which came out in the years subsequent to the tragedy, exemplified how the gradual growth of *glasnost* in the press began to outpace *glasnost* in the rest of Soviet society. That is, MN's frank reporting often revealed the

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[23] Marples, p.126.
[24] MN, No. 46 (Nov. 23-30, 1986) p. 12.

lack of openness forthcoming from Soviet authorities. MN continued to inform its audience of the official 'facts' about Chernobyl, but it progressively began to offer other perceptions of the events as well. Thus official statistics appeared, noting that of 237 hospitalized, 28 people had died while (after one year) 209 had been "cured", and asserting that "no residents of Kiev, Pripyat, Chernobyl or the villages in the area suffered from the radiation sickness."[25] While MN never contradicted this figure, an article by Andrei Pralnikov, published in July 1987, raised doubts about the 'normalcy' of the surrounding areas. Entitled simply "The Zone", the piece characterized Pripyat as a "ghost town" and raised the question of whether it was truly safe again. Pralnikov's sobering account stood in sharp contrast to the official view which maintained that even at the time of the accident, radiation levels were below those considered harmful.[26] The next year, Pralnikov again wrote about "Entering the Zone", observing: "I don't think any of us reporting from Chernobyl that May realized the seriousness of the accident."[27] Pralnikov's reassessment of the consequences of Chernobyl, diverged widely from the typical perspective of the Soviet press. For *Moscow News* it constituted a distinct break with the previous limits of openness.

MN also distinguished itself through its coverage of the trial of the APS director (V. Bryukhanov), chief engineer (N. Fomin) and several other figures being held to account for the disaster. Both the foreign and the Soviet media were blocked from attending most of the trial, except for its first and last days. MN's

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[25] MN, No. 51 (Dec. 28- Jan. 4, 1986) p.1; No. 18 (May 10-17, 1987) p. 5. These numbers have often been scrutinized in the West. Marples' study concluded that there is "little reason to accept the official figure... as a firm and valid tally." Marples, p.36.

[26] MN, No. 28 (July 19-26, 1987) p.11.

[27] MN, No. 17 (May 1-8, 1988) p.16.

correspondent, Pralnikov, however, showing a "healthy disdain" for the official secretiveness,[28] persisted and printed a detailed story of the accusations lodged against the defendants. Foremost among these was their silence and their failure to alert both the staff of the power station and the nearby population. The entire fiasco had proven that "the absence of *glasnost* still prevailed."[29] This observation was also reflected in the secretive nature of the trial proceedings. The verdict of the trial was revealed in a subsequent issue. The article related the punishments meted out, but more importantly it implicated poor training, lack of simulators at nuclear power stations, and the real consequences of misinformation.[30] In 1988, MN printed another piece related to the accident which hinted at design problems in the RBMK reactor itself.[31] Eventually MN would even publish articles which debated not only the questionable safety of Soviet nuclear power, but also items debating the alleged benefits of nuclear power.[32]

The newspaper's handling of Chernobyl marked a significant change in its general approach towards accidents and disasters. The sinking of the passengerliner *Admiral Nakhimov* in September 1986, for example, was reported in considerable detail. The number of dead (398) and rescued (838), the time it took for the ship to sink (7 minutes) and even the utter stupidity and gross negligence of the crews were bluntly described - as was its status as the third worst disaster in the history of

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[28] Marples, p.118.
[29] MN, No. 29 (July 26- Aug. 2, 1987) p.4.
[30] MN, No. 32 (Aug. 16-23, 1987) p.12.
[31] MN , No. 29 (Sun. July 17, 1988) p.10
[32] MN, No.2 (Jan.17-24, 1988), p.10; No.7 (Feb. 21-28, 1988) p.10; No.36 (Sept. 11-18, 1988), p.2; No.30 (Sun. July 23, 1989) pp. 1,5.

navigation.[33] Other train collisions, nautical disasters, fires, floods and explosions also 'made the news.' Most were described quite candidly with details of casualties, damages and causes.[34] The account of a fire at the Academy of Sciences Library in Leningrad, which destroyed over 400 000 books, sternly condemned the actions of the library director who tried to deceive the local authorities about the extent of the catastrophe and had actually used bulldozers to clear the yard of damaged books rescued from the flames. The article also reported how the citizens of Leningrad were assisting in the efforts to save the books.[35] Several rather bizarre incidents also showed up on the pages of MN, including reports of anglers set adrift on ice floes, the numerous fires caused by faulty television sets which had led to 900 deaths in one year, and a disturbing report of a woman setting herself on fire outside the Kremlin gates in June 1988.[36] The extent of *glasnost*'s expansion on the pages of MN however was highlighted by a 1989 story which described the sinking of a Soviet nuclear power submarine in the Norwegian Sea. It was admitted to be the fourth such accident in the USSR's nuclear fleet.[37] A similar degree of openness marked MN's coverage of natural disasters. Unlike its previous account of the earthquake in Tajikistan (see above), the coverage of the Armenian quake was brutally critical. Several issues were raised - the inefficiency of Soviet rescue teams, the lack of needed equipment, the

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[33] The two ships had apparently visibly observed each other, but had not reacted. It was stated that the crews were not drunk, but that nonetheless the captain had failed to raise any alarm. MN, No. 37 (Sept. 21-28, 1988) p.1; No. 51 (Dec. 28- Jan. 4, 1988) p. 3.

[34] MN, No. 46 (Nov. 23-30, 1986) p.3; No. 4 (Sun. Jan. 25, 1987) p.9; No. 12 (March 29-April 5, 1987) p. 4; No. 33 (Aug. 23-30, 1987) p. 12; No. 28 (July 17-24, 1988) p. 4; No. 35 (Sept. 4-11, 1988) p. 1.

[35] MN, No. 13 (April 3-10, 1988) p. 13.

[36] MN, No. 6 (Feb. 15-22, 1987) p. 1; No. 26 (July 5-12, 1987) p. 12; No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p. 10.

culpability of poor construction, the absence of forewarning and particularly the need to shut down the Armenian APS (located only 30km from Yerevan) which had escaped damage despite its perilous location.[38]

A comparable transition occurred in *Moscow News'* portrayal of the environment. The topic of environmental degradation provides one of the most extreme examples of contrast between MN's pre-*glasnost* and its *glasnost*-era reporting. In one of the most ludicrous articles published by the paper, it was declared that "According to Soviet experts Lake Baikal will preserve its primordial purity... through the next century." Baikal, MN asserted, was the "ecological standard for the planet."[39] Two years later, MN's line on the 'purity' of Lake Baikal had been drastically altered. The Central Committee had adopted a resolution on preserving the lake, and MN reported that 1.5 million cubic meters of industrial waste had been dumped into Baikal in the preceding 20 years. The result was the contamination of at least 50% of the water. This information, moreover, had been purposefully withheld from the press.[40] It was further revealed that a 20-year struggle to preserve Baikal had been waged, but that only the current policies of democratization had made this struggle public.[41] A similar reintroduction of an environmental issue into the public eye, involved the decision by the CPSU Central Committee to stop work on the scheme to transfer the flow of Siberian rivers. The plan to divert water to Central

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[37] Whether this is 100% accurate is immaterial - the fact that they would even admit any accidents in the nuclear fleet is stunning.

[38] MN, No. 51 (Dec. 25, 1988 - Jan. 5, 1989) pp. 1, 7, 8, 9, 10. The plant was officially closed in March 1989, but was reopened in 1995.

[39] MN, No. 21 (June 2-9, 1985) p. 9.

[40] MN, No. 15 (April 19-26, 1987) p. 13.

[41] MN, No. 25 (June 28- July 5, 1987) p.8.

Asia had "triggered... sharp public protest", and its cancellation demonstrated an "expression of real democracy."[42] Public protest had also halted illegal developments on the island of Khortitsa proving that, "unlike before, the public now has a say in matters of environmental protection."[43] The entire issue of environmental protection was portrayed in MN as a test of *glasnost* - a battle by the people against hazardous industrial developments and the secrecy which often surrounded them.[44] It thus elaborated on the damage inflicted on the Siberian tundra by oil and gas exploration and the plight of the Aral Sea where "plans foisted upon the Republic ruined the Aral and agriculture."[45] Ecological *glasnost* had proven that the fault lay largely in the existing system - in the failure to consider the ecological consequences before designing a plan.[46]

In addition to its criticism of large projects which had endangered lakes, seas, rivers and the tundra, MN also attacked sources of industrial pollution which endangered the health of surrounding populations. Again, the impact of *glasnost* and the precedent set by Chernobyl, was clear. In 1985 no stories appeared on the environment, except for the final issue which reported the closure of two large enterprises in Kiev due to pollution.[47] In 1987 and 1988, however, no less than eight major stories were published implicating industry in endangering the health of the

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[42] MN, No. 35 (Sept. 7-14, 1986) p. 14.
[43] MN, No. 44 (Nov. 8-15, 1987) p.12.
[44] MN, No. 52 (Jan. 3-10, 1988) p. 12.
[45] On Siberian tundra - MN, No. 49 (Sun. Dec. 6, 1987) p. 4; No. 41 (Oct. 16-23, 1988) p. 10. On the Aral - MN, No. 36 (Sept. 11-18, 1988) p. 7; No. 42 (Oct.23-30, 1988) p. 9.
[46] MN, No. 33 (Aug. 21-28, 1988) p.10.
[47] MN, No. 51 (Dec. 29, 1985 - Jan. 5, 1986) p.9.

people.[48] In Yaroslavl, 4000 tons of poisonous substances were released into the atmosphere per year because of the use of obsolete technology. Despite the ordered closure, the Minister of Chemical Industry obtained two postponements to keep the factories open. It was thus imperative, Andrei Pralnikov argued, that openness persevere to avert the authorities from making decisions "far from the interests of society." Pralnikov, an outspoken critic of the secrecy which had surrounded Chernobyl, lamented the lack of reliable scientific data and its misuse.[49] In 1989, MN returned to the theme announcing, for instance, the evacuation of a Siberian village because of its proximity to a gasworks (76 people had been diagnosed with gas poisoning in four months) and criticizing the government decision to build oil, gas and chemical complexes in Tyumen.[50] The link between environmental degradation and pollution and the inefficiency of the economic system was undeniable. MN leaned heavily on such dangerous consequences of ineptitude in its continuing campaign to promote *perestroika*. The proper management of resources had to be one of *perestroika*'s aims.[51] But more importantly, the fate of the Aral Sea, Lake Baikal and even Chernobyl had ultimately forced the admission that "Our native soviet bureaucrat is no less dangerous for the environment than the capitalist lusting for super profits."[52]

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[48] MN, No. 26 (July 5-12, 1987) p.9; No. 27 (July 12-19, 1987) p. 12; No. 42 (Oct. 25- No. 1, 1987) p. 12; No. 44 (Nov. 8-15, 1987) p. 14; No. 8 (Feb. 28- March 6, 1988) p.4, No. 33 (Aug. 21-28, 1988) pp. 9, 14.

[49] MN, No. 26 (July 5-12, 1987) p.9; No. 27 (July 12-19, 1987) p. 12.

[50] MN, No. 14 (Sun. April 2, 1989) p.5; No. 18 (Sun. April 30, 1989) p.9.

[51] MN, No. 7 (Feb. 21-28, 1988) p.12.

[52] Vladimir Simonov, MN, No. 44 (Nov. 6-13, 1988) p.3.

"THE LAST DAYS OF ILLUSION":[1]
GLASNOST IN CULTURE AND HISTORY

The incident at Chernobyl cracked open the limits of *glasnost*, and the introduction of disaster and environment reporting brought Soviet newspapers closer in substance to the papers of the West. However, it was in the increasingly frank appraisals of life inside the Soviet Union where *glasnost* would have its greatest impact. For although Gorbachev's reforms had been aimed at improving the material conditions of life in the USSR, the real revolution occurred in the sphere of 'culture' - as *glasnost* was applied to literature, the arts and academia. At its most utilitarian, 'openness' had been conceived of as a frank appraisal of the practical problems which were impeding economic growth. It was honesty about the need to improve the standard of living and the corresponding admission of shortages and deficiencies in the rudiments of life - housing, food, goods. But amidst the orchestrated campaigns against corruption, alcoholism, etc., openness about other aspects of Soviet life emerged. In retrospect, such a internal momentum seems inevitable. Discussions of corruption and stagnation were essential to removing impediments to economic growth, but such discussions were inexorably linked to discussions about the roots of these phenomena. How could one tackle the problem of Soviet 'backwardness' in technology without eventually confronting the nature of the Soviet scientific establishment? A question which would, unless externally limited, potentially lead to the issue of dissidence in the scientific community. Thus even the most seemingly

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[1] From Remnick's Lenin's Tomb, p.199.

benign inquiries into societal problems often led to the exposure of much more serious and compromising issues.

By 1986, there appeared to have been at least tacit recognition of the fact that the policies of stringent control of cultural life which had been pursued during the Stalin and Brezhnev administrations had contributed to the general malaise in Soviet society. The battle for *perestroika* was not just a matter of improving technology, it entailed reforming the attitudes of the people as well. It was deemed necessary to extend openness to more than the material insufficiencies of Soviet life, and it was gradually acknowledged that *glasnost* was needed to effect the mental transformation required to overcome the habits and mindsets of the stagnation era. It became apparent that Gorbachev, like Khrushchev, was prepared to allow the people much more freedom of expression in the sphere of 'culture' than other Soviet leaders. The expansion of openness in this realm, however, also had unexpectedly radical ramifications. The relaxation of censorship meant that a multitude of plays, books, and films which had been banned during the Brezhnev (and sometimes even Khrushchev) years resurfaced. Soon, it became unavoidable to first admit that they had, in fact, been banned and ultimately to confront the question of why they had been suppressed. Inevitably the rehabilitation of the works of artists, authors and playwrights who had themselves been the victims of persecution, brought to light the extent to which previous Soviet administrations had controlled 'deviant' artistic expression in the USSR and to what extent the very history of the state had been distorted.

The practical need for openness about problems in the economic system as well as the desire to reinvigorate the 'human factor' by relaxing restrictions on public life inevitably began to lead constantly back to the past. Perhaps the most important step in the 'liberalization' of Soviet culture was the decision to fill in the 'blank spots' of Soviet history. In many respects, it was virtually impossible to diminish the controls on artistic expression without confronting the wall of falsifications and omissions which Soviet history had become. In fact, many would argue that the preservation of these illusions was the foremost reason for the tight control of other forms of expression.[2] David Remnick offered an apt description in his book Lenin's Tomb:

> The Kremlin took history so seriously that it created a massive bureaucracy to control it, to fabricate its language and content.... The regime created an empire that was a vast room, its doors locked, its windows shuttered. All books and newspapers allowed into the room carried the Official Version of Events, and the radio and television blared the general line day and night. Those who were loyal servants of the Official Version were rewarded and pronounced 'professors' and 'journalists.' There were secrets everywhere.[3]

Attempting to explore the darkened corners of this 'vast room' was certainly not part of Mikhail Gorbachev's agenda when he took power. As R.W. Davies has convincingly demonstrated, even in mid-1986 Gorbachev was reluctant to undertake a thorough reexamination of the past.[4] A genuine 'thaw' began only in late 1986. As was discussed in previous chapters, it was at this time that the CPSU was stressing the need for democratization and further openness; as well, new reformist editors were appointed to several key posts. Various consequential works, previously banned, were

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[2] Benn, Developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics, p.179.
[3] Remnick, p.4.
[4] Davies, p.129.

released. Finally, in February 1987, Gorbachev himself announced that it was time to eliminate the "blank pages" in Soviet history and literature issuing in a period of cultural renaissance in the USSR.[5]

Moscow News in 1985 and 1986 was generally more concerned with international issues than domestic ones. Nonetheless, within its mandate of presenting a view of life inside the USSR to the rest of the world, it devoted considerable space to 'propagandizing' Soviet life. Prior to the advent of *glasnost*, MN's portrayal of Soviet cultural life can only be described as trite, stifled, and stultifyingly boring. Characterized by superficial attempts at depicting the 'USSR Panorama', the paper rarely got more in-depth than an interview with "Grandfather Frost and the Snow Maiden" or the celebration of a new "Hymn of Democratic Youth."[6] The distinction was stressed between the 'genuine culture' of the Soviet Union and the 'pseudoculture' of the West - implying the superiority and unforced nature of the Soviet variant [7] But even while Chernenko lived there was evidence of a degree of openness. It was reported, for instance, that the first Soviet production of Prokofiev's 'The Flaming Angel' was being staged in Tashkent. Written in the twenties, MN explained its absence from Soviet venues as "owing to its seemingly mystic nature...."[8] Thus while the debut of such a production indicated a kind of thaw in culture; the superficial explanation offered by MN revealed its limits.

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[5] Davies, p.130.
[6] MN, No. 52 (Jan. 6-13, 1985) p.1; No. 9 (Sun. March 3, 1985) p.9.
[7] MN, No. 33 (Sun. Aug. 10, 1985) p.11.
[8] MN, No. 2 (Jan. 20-27, 1985) p.11.

Gorbachev's succession made relatively little impact on the nature of MN's domestic reporting in 1985. However, by spring 1986 MN had begun to illustrate that an official link had been made stressing the importance of mobilizing the human factor in order to overcome economic stagnation . MN advertised the connection between economic 'restructuring' and greater cultural freedom, reporting, for example, that the Congress of Russian Writers had decided that if rebuilding the economy entailed "psychological changes", then it was imperative to overcome the "obsolete" in literature as well.[9] The Union of Composers and Filmmakers was also seen to pledge its support to the ideas of renovation and openness at a congress characterized by "heated debate that often strayed from the topic of literature to discuss issues such as pollution, depletion of farmland and the rerouting of rivers."[10] In the feature "Our Commentary", MN broached the issue of artistic credibility, stating plainly that the theater had failed to reflect Soviet life in a meaningful manner and that consequently, "the theatre has lost the trust of the general public."[11] The re-establishment of this trust and credibility entailed primarily an honest reappraisal of the past - a reappraisal which manifested itself on the pages of *Moscow News* in late 1986 and early 1987.

The main historical topic to be discussed on the pages of MN in 1985 and early 1986 was, predictably, the Great Patriotic War. Not only could the war be seen as one of the primary defining moments of the Soviet experience, but features on the war lent themselves to being tied in with one of the overarching themes of the newspaper - the

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[9] MN, No. 51 (Dec. 29, 1985 - Jan. 5, 1986) p.1.
[10] MN, No. 27 (July 13-20, 1986) p.3.
[11] MN, No. 37 (Sept. 21-28, 1986) p.3.

supreme importance of preserving and forwarding the cause of world peace.[12] History, particularly the history of the conflict which befell the Soviet people during the 1940s, was important primarily because it "teaches us that war must be fought against before it starts."[13] The events of W.W.II were held up as a terrifying cautionary tale - aimed both at Soviet readers and, undoubtedly, at foreigners. MN's historical coverage of the war was quick to reject the interpretations of "bourgeois falsifiers," and to emphasize the importance of Soviet actions. Several items implied the complicity of the West in Hitler's rise to power asserting, for example, that "big capital" had turned the Nazis from a fringe party into a ruling one and that "western ruling circles" had aided in Germany's rearmament in the hopes it would destroy the USSR.[14] The Soviet version further argued that Stalingrad had been the major turning point of the war with Germany; that the Soviets could have defeated the Nazis without the help of the Allies;[15] that the USSR had been forced into the non-aggression pact by the inaction of France and England;[16] that the Red Army's march into Eastern Europe had been a welcomed "liberation"[17] (which upset the US only because it apparently

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[12] Pursuing an effective end to the arms race became the prime component of Gorbachev's foreign policy in these years. During this time, the publicization of the ideals of peace and disarmament was quite obviously one of MN's main goals. However, it should be noted that the theme of peace and disarmament was readily apparent before Gorbachev came to power. It was, I believe, not only a propaganda tool aimed at the West peculiar to his policies, but also part of the larger mythology of the Great Patriotic War. That is, the sacrifices of post-war era were often justified in reference to the need to ensure peace and to avoid another tragedy as devestating as the War. The question, of course, is how much of this is self-serving propaganda instigated by the state and how much is the inevitable result of losing 20 million people and seeing your country ravaged by an invading army.

[13] MN, No.1 (Sun. Jan.6, 1985), p.1.

[14] MN, No.18 (May 12 - 19, 1985) p.5.

[15] MN, No.15 (April 21 -28, 1985) p.4.

[16] MN, No.18 (1985) p.5.

[17] MN, No.15 (1985) p.4.

deprived them of an 'open' market)[18] ; and also that "the atomic bomb played no role in Japanese surrender" which was actually the direct result of the August 9 entry of the Red Army onto the Far Eastern Front which had led to the loss by the Japanese of 700 000 men in 24 days.[19] The historical veracity of all of these interpretation is clearly disputable, but they all conform exceedingly well with the ideals of Marxist Leninism and the framework which viewed the Great Patriotic War as a stunning victory of socialism and the united Soviet people over the evil ambitions of fascism and imperialism.

The years 1985 and 1986 generally displayed the conservatism of MN's approach to Soviet history. In August 1985, for example, an article about the 60th anniversary of the Stakhanovite movement credited it with sparking the industrial revolution of the USSR.[20] Furthermore, although the severity of blame laid upon the West was not as pronounced, there was virtually no change in the Soviet account of the war.[21] In August 1986, a report on experimental family farming emphasized the difference between the new experiments and private farming in the past: "[I]n the early 30s, the rural rich (Kulaks)... were the most numerous groups of exploiters in our country, the most dangerous enemies of Soviet power. A life and death struggle had to be waged against them."[22] The standard assessment of the Revolution was also virtually unchanged - although Trotsky was mentioned it was asserted that he had never been a Bolshevik in "the depth of his consciousness" and that the success of

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[18] MN, No.18 (1985) p.5.
[19] MN, No. 32 (Aug. 18 - 25, 1985) p.4.
[20] MN, No. 33 (Sun. Aug. 18, 1985) p.12.
[21] See, for example, MN, No.25 (Jun.29 - Jul.6, 1986) pp.8-9.
[22] MN, No.32 (Aug.17 - 24, 1986) p.12.

Bolshevik agitation was due to its truthfulness.[23] Thus the foundations of Soviet life as they manifested themselves in the mythology/history of the Union portrayed in MN remained fundamentally untouched throughout 1986.

Real and radical change began to reveal in MN itself in mid to late 1986 in articles about the most significant publications, plays, and films. Unlike the 'fat' journals, or literary monthlies, MN did not directly participate in the publication of previously suppressed works. Instead, the paper occasionally printed reviews or, more often, published articles discussing the career/life of the artists. In 1986 and 1987 the cultural 'renaissance' which gripped the USSR was reflected on the pages of *Moscow News*. Names such as Mikhail Shatrov, Taras Shevchenko, Alexei Herman, Alexander Bek, Vladimir Nabokov, Mikhail Bulgakov, Boris Pasternak, Alexandra Kollantai, Alexander Hertzen and Marc Chagall made their way into print - sometimes for the first time in decades.[24] Furthermore, the previous suppression of their works was admitted and discussed. Upon the release of Herman's film *Operation Happy New Year*, which had been completed in the seventies, MN printed an interview with the filmmaker. Herman explained, "When the film was ready, it was met by people who made law out of their own misconceptions and bad taste."[25] MN heralded the imminent publications of Bek, Nabokov, Bulgakov, and Anatoly Rybakov on the front page of issue No.38 under the banner "Good News."[26] The printing of Rybakov's

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[23] MN, No.45 (Nov. 9 - 16, 1986) pp.3 & 10.

[24] MN, No. 14 (April 13-20, 1986) p. 11; No. 15 (April 20-27, 1986) p.11; No.17 (May 4-11, 1986) p.11; No.38 (Sept.28 - Oct.5, 1986) p.1; No.52 (Jan. 4-11, 1987) p.16; No.4 (Sun. Jan.25, 1987) p.11; No.8 (March 1-8, 1987) p.10.

[25] MN, No. 17 (May 4-11, 1986) p.11.

[26] MN, No. 38 (Sept.28 - Oct.5, 1986) p.1.

novel *Children of the Arbat* (written in the sixties) and the general release of Tengiz Abuladze's film *Repentance* were, arguably, the most significant 'cultural' breakthroughs of 1986. Both works dealt expressly with the repressions of the Stalinist regime, and MN's coverage of their resurrections did not shy from the issue.[27] The impact of Stalinism meant that "Lots of blank spots have accumulated in the history, culture and social memory of this nation." [28] As MN endeavoured to help fill in these 'blank spots' the paper was marked by stories about artists whose work had been banned by previous administrations, but whose talents were now being recognized. By the end of 1987, it could be asserted simply that "There are no unmentionable people."[29]

The close connection between *glasnost* in literature and history - which was exemplified in *Repentance* and *Children of the Arbat* - was also apparent in many other works such as Bulgakov's topical satires of Stalin and Shatrov's controversial play *Onward! Onward! Onward!* As the loosening of constraints in art and literature progressed it became unavoidable that some sort of reexamination of history would follow. In November 1986, in an issue dedicated to the anniversary of the 1917 Revolution, *Moscow News* editor-in-chief Yegor Yakovlev called for greater frankness in historical matters asserting that "history cannot be style-edited."[30] In early 1987, soon after Gorbachev's announcement that it was necessary to fill in the missing pages of Soviet history. MN introduced a new "regular feature" entitled 'Glimpses of the

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[27] MN, No. 38 (Sept.28 - Oct.5, 1986) p.1; No.48 (Dec. 7-14, 1986) p.11; No. 7 (Feb. 27- Mar. 1, 1987) p.13; No. 15 (April 19-26, 1987) p.11.
[28] MN, No. 41 (Oct 18-25, 1987) p.16.
[29] MN, No. 50 (Dec. 20-27, 1987) p.3.
[30] MN, No. 45 (Nov. 16-23, 1986) p.3.

Past', which reprinted a speech delivered by Yuri Afanasyev the rector of the Moscow State Institute of Historians and Archivists. The speech castigated the state of Soviet historical studies: "I would primarily use the word stagnant to characterize the state of domestic historical science...." Textbooks had been written "lifelessly, dryly and monotonously" and portrayed a "one-sided crippled picture of many events." Even decades after Stalin's death Soviet history had not overcome the legacy and "sometimes directly reproduce[d] Stalin's scheme of the victory of the October Revolution and socialist construction in the USSR - a scheme that is far from the truth."[31] A true revision of Soviet history had begun.

In many respects, MN's reexamination of history focused on Lenin and the Revolution. In January 1987, the recently appointed editor-in-chief, Yegor Yakovlev (a former Lenin biographer) wrote an article which extensively quoted Lenin's 'Last Testament' - materials which contained a strong indictment of Stalin. Yakovlev's piece attempted, as well, to reinforce the parallels between Gorbachev's *perestroika* and Leninism by asserting that Lenin's writing had deemed it "necessary to combine a well-regulated centralized government with expanding democracy."[32] MN also covered the release of a series of plays by Mikhail Shatrov which offered a new view into a very old theme - the Bolshevik Revolution. Shatrov was one of the first to offer an 'objective' portrayal of some of the other players in the Revolution, particularly Trotsky and Bukharin. The staging of these dramas provoked a good deal of controversy and commotion. MN maintained strict support arguing that "We certainly

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[31] MN, No. 2 (Jan. 18 -25. 1987) pp.8-9
[32] MN, No.3 (Jan.25 - Feb. 1, 1987) p.13.

need such history."[33] Innovations such as these were countered in MN with articles that an outside observer might label 'conservative interpretations of history.' That is, articles continued to appear which stressed the failure of the February Revolution, the necessity and public support of the Bolshevik Revolution, as well as the justness of the Red cause in the Civil War.[34] Nonetheless, MN drew attacks from those who felt its historical revisionism had already gone too far. Afanasyev, in particular, attracted scathing comments - which MN dutifully printed to emphasize its commitment to providing an open forum for diverse opinions. Four scholars, particularly upset by Afanasyev's soft-line on Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, wrote, "[W]e deem it necessary to draw attention to Yuri Afanasyev's strange and fallacious stance in appraising the Party's Leninist general course of building socialism." Afanasyev responded that this letter was only a "statement of their non-acceptance of the very nature of *perestroika*."[35] MN followed this exchange with the publication of several readers' letters representative of both sides of the debate. One, for example, castigated Afanasyev's article as the "fruit of scientific ignorance and demagoguery." Most, however, rebutted the four opponents, who were, "a cogent example of the manifestation of the psychology of stagnation."[36]

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[33] MN, No.4 (Sun. Jan.25, 1987) p. 11.

[34] MN, No.6 (Feb 15-22, 1987) pp. 8-9; No. 14 (April 12-19, 1987) pp.8-9; No.28 (July 19-26, 1987) p.8; No.36(Sept.13-20, 1987). Perhaps the 'best' of these accounts appeared in MN, No.33 (Aug.23-30, 1987)pp.8-9 which described the triumph of Soviet power in Central Asia as proving that even the uprisings initiated by the Whites and the SRs "couldn't stop the Eastern people from liberating themselves."

[35] MN, No.19 (May 17-24, 1987) p.11. Afanasyev and Shatrov were staunch defenders of Kamenev and Zinoviev (or at least of their role in the Revolution) arguing that if one believed them to be traitors "one cannot understand why both were nominated by Lenin to the all-Russian Central Executive Committee." MN, No.45 (Nov. 15-22, 1987) p.4.

[36] MN, No.21 (Sun. May 24, 1987) p.2.

One issue that must be acknowledged is the close connection between the issues being publicized in *Moscow News* by Y. Afanasyev and M. Shatrov and those being advanced in more 'official' forums by M. Gorbachev and A. Yakovlev. In September, MN published an article by Afanasyev which condemned Stalinism and stated that collectivization, the building of a bureaucracy, and mass repressions contradicted Lenin's plans and "were an outrage against the ideals of socialism."[37] Gorbachev would make similar remarks in his speech for the 70th Anniversary of the Revolution in November, declaring that collectivization had contributed to the emergence of a command economy.[38] It was apparent that the plan among the Kremlin reformers was to break any links between Stalinism and socialism, as well as to resurrect their own interpretation of Leninism which included a reevaluation of the New Economic Policy and its creator Nikolai Bukharin.[39] The situation suggests that Gorbachev and Yakovlev wanted to tie their own reforms of the Soviet economic system more closely to Leninist thought. In order to do so, it was necessary to redefine the NEP (which in a sense resembled their own 'plan') as distinctly Leninist and to recast Bukharin as a true socialist. It would not be an outlandish conclusion then to see *Moscow News*' extensive positive coverage of Bukharin as part of that campaign.[40] In 1988, in a feature written jointly with a reputable American professor of political science, Stephen Cohen, Len Karpinsky would articulate the necessity of

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[37] MN, No. 37 (Sept. 13-20, 1987) p.10.

[38] See Davies, p.135.

[39] Davies refers to A. Yakovlev's report to the Academy of Sciences in April 1987 which called for a reevaluation of the NEP, p.131.

[40] MN profiled Bukharin, No. 49 (Sun. Dec.6, 1987) p.12, as a "outstanding Party statesman" who had had an imprtant role in the routing of Trotsyism, and who had been described in Lenin's 'Testament' as "the entire Party's favorite." In a sense it would seem that Gorbachev, Yakovlev

clarifying Bukharin's role in the "task of separating socialism from Stalinism and of making it clear... the two concepts are alien to each other."[41]

To acknowledge the influence of higher powers on the reexamination of history in 1987, should not detract from the glaring fact that *glasnost* was having a tangible impact on public life in the USSR. The changes were manifest on the pages of *Moscow News*. Perhaps the most tangible of these, reported by MN in its first edition of 1987, and the one which served to convince even the most ardent cold warriors in the West that *glasnost* was more than an attempt to improve public relations, was the return from exile of Andrei Sakharov, the famous Russian scientist whose opposition to Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and other 'transgressions' had earned him seven years of internal exile in Gorky.[42] Sakharov's return to Moscow provided a distinct signal that the Gorbachev administration was committed to real openness. Other topics such as the increasing visibility of a rock or 'new wave' culture; the acknowledgment of problems such as suicide, drug addiction, gambling, and teenage rebellion; as well as stories about the aged and disabled had also appeared by 1987.[43] AIDS made it onto the pages of the paper although the reporting reflected a xenophobic perspective arguing that the virus was only found in foreigners, drug addicts and those who lived a "disorderly sexual life" and, in April, maintaining that "the facts uncovered so far are compelling ... people to subscribe to the hypothesis that

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and their loyal servants were endeavouring to not only deStalinize the USSR, but also to provide an alternative history that would have been the 'true' extension of Lenin's goals.

[41] The article goes on to clarify Bukharin's interpretation of socialism and the NEP. MN, No.8 (Feb.28 - Mar.6, 1988) p.13.

[42] MN, No. 52 (Jan. 4-11, 1987) p.3.

[43] MN, No. 3 (Jan.25 - Feb.1, 1987) p.9; No. 48 (Dec. 7-14, 1986) p.13; No.5 (Feb. 8-15, 1987)p.13; No.12 (Mar.29 - Apr.5, 1987) p.2; No.36 (Sept.13-20, 1987) p.1; No.39 (Oct.4-11, 1987) p. 12; No. 11(Mar. 22-29, 1987) p.10; No.29 (July 26 - Aug.2, 1987) p.2.

the AIDS virus originated inside the US laboratories developing means of biological warfare."[44] The pages of the paper also saw an ongoing debate concerning the reevaluation of geneticists Lysenko and Vavilov, and physicist Pyotr Kapitsa[45] as well as calls for the restructuring of both the Academy of Sciences and Soviet medicine.[46] *Glasnost* in *Moscow News* 1987 was an interesting mix.

As 1988 opened, however, it was becomingly increasingly evident that Gorbachev's *perestroika* was meeting considerable opposition - particularly in regards to the revision of history. News of the official rehabilitation of Bukharin and several other victims of the 1938 purge was greeted with unrestrained enthusiasm by writer Y. Ambartsumov: "[W]e were not allowed to mention next to Lenin's name the names of those who did stand next to him.... The truth triumphs today. [T]heir absolution is the downfall of their tormentors."[47] However, there was also increasing evidence that some in society were unhappy with the unrelenting attacks on the past. For example, Ales Adamovich, a prominent Byelorussian writer, was actually sued by a veteran who took offense at anti-Stalinist remarks he made in an interview with *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. MN also published a reader's letter which further chastised Adamovich: "By destroying Stalin you are wiping out all the successes and achievements of that period. You are insulting the memory of our people...."[48] Controversy surrounded Shatrov's

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[44] MN, No. 3 (Jan.25 - Feb.1, 1987) p.10; No.10 (Mar. 15-22, 1987) p.9; No. 17 (Sun. April 26, 1987) p.10; No.35 (Sept. 6-13, 1987) p.4; No.36 (Sept.13-20, 1987) p.4.

[45] MN, No.1 (Jan.11-18, 1987) p.11; No.14 (April 12-19, 1987) p.10; No.46 (Nov. 22-29, 1987) p.10; No.50 (Dec.20-27, 1987) p.2; No.5 (Feb. 7-14, 1988) p.2.

[46] MN, No. 12 (Mar.29 - Apr.5, 1987) p.10; No.34 (Aug.30-Sept.6, 1987) p.4; No.1 (Jan 10-17, 1988) p.12.

[47] MN, No.7 (Feb. 21-28, 1988) p.3. Other articles concerning official rehabilitations: Ibid., pp. 4, 15.

[48] MN, No.9 (March 6-13, 1988) p.2; No.14 (April 10-17, 1988) p.2.

play, *Dalshe.. dalshe... dalshe!* (Onward... onward... onward!), which, according to some went "well beyond the bounds of legitimate discussion."[49]

The ultimate proclamation of conservatism, however, appeared in the form of a letter, printed by *Sovetskaya Rossiya* on March 13, 1988. Nina Andreyeva's "I Cannot Forgo My Principles" was "a complete contradiction of everything Mikhail Gorbachev, Aleksandr Yakovlev, and the liberal intelligentsia had been saying for more than a year."[50] It also went beyond being simply the ramblings of a reactionary school teacher. Rather it had the support (perhaps even the editorial revisions) of none other than Politburo conservative Yegor Ligachev. Ligachev had authorized its timely publication which coincided with Gorbachev's departure for Yugoslavia.[51] (Alexander Yakovlev was also, conveniently, out of the country.)[52] Furthermore, Ligachev 'recommended' that the letter be reprinted in other publications. For most, such an action, obviously emanating from the upper echelons of power, indicated that Gorbachev's experiment was over and that *glasnost* was at an end. Yegor Yakovlev would later remark, "It was a terrifying time. Absolutely everything we had ever hoped for and dreamed of was on the line."[53] Aside from a statement of objection sent to the Central Committee by the Filmmakers' Union on March 23 (at the behest of playwright Aleksandr Gelman) there was no opposition offered for nearly three weeks.

Finally, on the August 5, a rebuttal of the Andreyeva letter appeared in *Pravda*. The full-page, unsigned article was entitled "The Principles of *Perestroika*" and was

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[49] Davies, p.139. MN, No.2 (Jan.10-17, 1988) p.12; No.10 (Mar. 13-20, 1988) p.12.
[50] Remnick, p.75.
[51] For a thorough treatment of this issue see Davies, p143.
[52] Remnick, p.76.
[53] Quoted in Remnick, p.77.

probably the joint creation of Aleksandr Yakovlev and Gorbachev, himself. R.W. Davies described the piece as "remarkably angry, disturbed and passionate excited and repetitive." It was vehemently anti-Stalinist while calling for revolutionary restructuring and acknowledging that the letter had to be viewed as a 'manifesto of the forces against *perestroika*.'[54] The appearance of this refutation in *Pravda* indicated to an anxious public that despite resistance from certain corners, reform would not end. Once reassured of this continuity, *Moscow News* was virulent in its attacks on the letter and the forces which it represented. A piece in the April 3-10 edition chastised Andreyeva for not recognizing the "deep-seated need to squeeze the slave out of people, to free them from fear and submissiveness" and deemed the letter plainly "antiquated propaganda."[55] In the April 17-24 edition, MN published a letter by Lyudmila Sarakina (rejected for publication by *Sovetskaya Rossiya*) asserting that Andreyeva's words were "immoral."[56] In May, a MN column reasoned that the printing of this "manifesto of enemies of democratization" was, in a sense, needed since it lessened the ambiguity and brought the serious problem of conservatism to the fore. Even these forces must be allowed a voice since to silence them would only be to impose limits on *glasnost* and democracy.[57] In the realm of politics and history (subjects virtually inseparable at this point in Soviet history), 1988 signaled the beginning of a battle in the Soviet Union between those who thought the introspection and criticism had gone far enough and those who desired further, radical change.

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[54] Davies, p.144.
[55] MN, No. 13 (April 3-10, 1988) p.3.
[56] Mn, No.15 (April 17-24, 1988) pp.12-13.
[57] MN, No. 18 (May 8-15, 1988) p.3.

In many ways, a quick survey of the issues that began to appear on the pages of *Moscow News* in 1988, 1989 and 1990 testifies to the victory of the 'liberals', as well as to the internal momentum which *glasnost* had accrued. Among the topics which surfaced in MN during these years were discussion of the prison system, the death penalty, the difficulties of emigration, infringements of human rights (particularly in reference to the requirements for domicile registration), juvenile delinquency, women's rights and family problems.[58] The imminent publications of Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago, Zamyatin's We, Orwell's Animal Farm, Yuri Daniel's 'Redemption' and many other works testified to a continuing lessening of restrictions on literature[59] - as did the release of the film Little Vera which offered a startlingly harsh look into the realities of Soviet family life.[60] MN also offered a forum for a Soviet scientist disillusioned with the "archaic" state of Soviet science and the effects that prolonged isolation from the international community had on it.[61] One of the most revealing pieces, however, was written by a reporter who had become pregnant and thus subjected herself to all the inconveniences of imminent maternity in the Soviet Union (long waits for appointments, polyclinic bureaucracy, a lack of maternity clothes, maternity bras and cotton underwear, and a relatively high number of deaths during

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[58] MN, No. 12 (Mar.27 - Apr.3, 1988) p. 6; No.18 (May 8-15, 1988) p.4; No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p. 7; No.27 (Sun. July 2, 1989) p.15; No. 49 (Sun. Dec.3, 1989) p.5; No. 3 (Jan. 24-31, 1988) p. 2; No. 5 (Feb 7-14, 1988) p.9; No.28 (July 17-24, 1988) p.4; No.38 (Sept.25 - Oct 2, 1988) p.4; No. 5 (Feb 7-14, 1988) p.4; No.20 (May22-29, 1988) p.3; No.34 (Aug.28 - Sept.4, 1988) p.2; No.33 (Aug.21-28, 1988) p. 13; No.35 (Sept. 4-11, 1988) p.10; No.24 (Sun. June 11, 1989) pp.10, 13.

[59] MN, No. 5 (Feb 7-14, 1988) p.11; No.9 (March 6-13, 1988) p.9; No.26 (July 3-10, 1988) p.16; No.36 (Sept. 11-18, 1988) p. 16.

[60] MN, No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p. 11.

[61] MN , No.22 (June 5-12, 1988) p.7.

childbirth).[62] By 1989, a startling report would appear claiming that the USSR could produce less than half of the medicines required by the population, and that even with imports only 75-80% of people with diabetes, arthritis, tuberculosis, asthma or cardiovascular disease received adequate medications.[63] In another health related issue, MN published an article in late '89 which spoke "freely" of the "people punished in this country by being committed to psychiatric hospitals."[64] The highly sensitive topic of organized crime was also addressed under stunning titles such as "Up Against the Mafia", "The Soviet Mafia: Inevitability or Paradox" and "The Pyramid of Organized Crime." The roots of the Soviet makia it was asserted lay in the "deformed system of economic management," in "bureaucratization," and in the "administrative command" system.[65] By 1989, it was becoming increasingly clear that there were few issues that remained taboo for the Soviet press.

Nina Andreyeva's letter did not silence *Moscow News*. MN resolutely pursued its course of deStalinization printing detailed stories about the victims of repression.[66] The paper also carried several articles criticizing Stalin's role in the Great Patriotic War. "The Whole Horrible and Bitter Truth," by A. Samsonov, asserted that "gross miscalculations and blunders" allowed the Germans to advance on Stalingrad in 1942, that the purges of 1937-38 weakened the Red Army, while A. Adamovich's "The War

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[62] MN, No.29 (Sun. July 17, 1988) p. 16. The lack of adequate care for expectant mothers and newborns was pursued in MN, No.16 (Sun. April 16, 1989) p.4.

[63] MN, No. 23 (Sun. June 4, 1989) p.5.

[64] MN, No.44 (Sun. Oct.29, 1989) p.5. No. 43 (Nov.4-11, 1990) p.14.

[65] MN, No. No.14 (April 10-17, 1988) p.13; No.33 (Aug. 21-28, 1988) p.12; No.39 (Oct. 2-9, 2988) p.14; No.46 (Nov. 20-17, 1988) p.12; No.51 (Dec.25, 1988 - Jan.1, 1989) p.13.

[66] MN, No.50 (Dec. 20-27, 1987) pp.11, 16; No. 6 (Feb. 14-21, 1988) p.16; No.7 (Feb. 21-28, 1988) p.4; No.11 (March 20-27, 1988); No.14 (April 10-17, 1988) p.9; No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p.2; No.26 (July 3-10, 1988) p.10.

Was Won By The People" accused Stalin of abandoning the Army in the first ten days of the war.[67] The publication of these articles drew often angry responses, which MN dutifully printed.[68] The prominent dissident historian, Roy Medvedev, was even enlisted to argue his case against a defender of Stalin.[69] One columnist asked his audience why there was no protest that a city, a district in Moscow and two universities still bore the name of the organizer of the mass repressions - Zhdanov.[70] In the summer of 1988, the victims of the Moscow trials were rehabilitated. Y. Ambartsumov's piece in MN described how Zinoviev, Kamenev and others of "Lenin's earliest comrades-in-arms" were tortured and forced to confess to imaginary crimes. Ambartsumov linked the forced collectivization of the thirties with the "genocide" of the peasantry and specified how Stalin enlisted Yagoda to pin Kirov's murder on the Zinoviev-Kamenev 'bloc.' MN followed up by printing a comprehensive list of the victims of repression form 1936-1941.[71] Of course, a certain conservatism persisted in the paper. Lenin and Leninism remained, not surprisingly, a sheltered topic - "[H]is writings... answer the most complicated questions...[and are] a true and reliable assistant at the sharp dangerous turns of history."[72] MN fought against Stalinism and Stalinists on the basis that they were the main threat to *perestroika.*

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[67] MN, No. 6 (Feb. 14-21, 1988) p.12; No.9 (March 6-13, 1988) p.2. Also MN, No.17 (May 1-8, 1988) p.3.

[68] MN, No.13(April 3-10, 1988) p.13; No.14 (April 10-17, 1988) p.2.

[69] MN, No. 24 (June 19-26, 1988) p.12.

[70] MN, No.25 (June 26 - July 3, 1988) p.3.

[71] MN, No.25 (June 26 - July 3, 1988) p.10; No.28 (July 17-24, 1988) p.16. *Pravda* and *Izvestia* also published this list.

[72] MN, No.17 (May1-8, 1988) p.10.

The flurry of anti-Stalinism in the first half of 1988 was not unique to *Moscow News*. Both the conservatives and the reformers were "extremely active" in the press in the weeks preceding the 19th Party Conference. Gorbachev's opening report to the Conference reflected a theme similar to that which had been played out on the pages of MN in the preceding months - he stressed the continuity between Lenin and *perestroika* while making it "abundantly clear that a complete break with the Stalinist political system was essential."[73] The debate which raged in the halls of the conference over the following days often returned to the topic of history; "many of the delegates were extremely hostile to the uncompromising condemnation of Stalinism."[74] The final day of the conference offered conservative Y. Ligachev the chance to rail against irresponsible attacks on the past struggle for socialism. Ligachev was particularly offended by *Moscow News*, which he singled out for intense criticism.[75] But it was Gorbachev's final remarks which would have the greatest impact:

> There is one further question, comrades, which was raised on the eve of the Conference and at the Conference itself - the construction of a Memorial to the victims of the repressions... it is our political and moral duty to restore justice to the victims of lawlessness. Let us carry this out by constructing a Memorial in Moscow. I am convinced that this step will be supported by the whole Soviet people.[76]

The campaign for a Memorial predated the Conference and had its roots, according to David Remnick, in the work of 'old' (Khrushchev era) intellectuals such as Y. Afanasyev and Len Karpinsky as well as in the deeds of a 24 year-old named Dmitri

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[73] Davies, pp.152-153. Davies also stressed that Gorbachev's continuity between Lenin's policies and his own was "historically dubious" and, in a sense, a new mythology.

[74] Davies, p. 154.

[75] Davies, p.156.

[76] Quoted in Davies, p. 156.

Yurasov who had managed to compile a set of 200,000 index cards listing the names and stories of people killed or imprisoned under Stalin.[77] An initiative group, spearheaded by Afanasyev, had compiled the petition which triggered Gorbachev's announcement. Although seemingly "tacked-on" to his closing remarks, Gorbachev's decision marked a distinct victory for those struggling to ensure that the truth about the past not be forgotten. MN, a staunch supporter (along with *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Ogonyok*) would devote an entire issue (December 4-11, 1988) to the founding of the Memorial Society and the story of the thirties, forties and fifties, "the time of terror."[78]

The only issues which really remained sacrosanct as MN moved into 1989 were the basic tenets of Leninism and, of course, the sanctity of the Union itself.

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[77] For an in-depth survey of the roots of this movement see Remnick, pp.101-119.
[78] MN, No.48 (Dec. 4-11, 1988) pp.1-16.

DISINTEGRATION: NATIONALISM AND POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

Although many things had changed as of 1988 - concrete progress in the realm of political reform and undeniable evidence of a greatly increased freedom of the press - one maxim still constrained public discourse: "the system itself is absolutely sacred."[1] The questioning of the true untouchables, the very institutions of Soviet power, were still not evident in the central press. Lenin, Leninism, the innate superiority of socialism, the leading role of the CPSU, and the military remained, for the most part, outside of the bounds of acceptable criticism. From 1988 to 1991, however, these last limits of *glasnost* crumbled. Gorbachev made several attempts to reform the political superstructure of the USSR - the relatively free multi-candidate elections for the Congress of People's Deputies was a significant break from the past, but the difficulty which prominent reformers had acquiring nomination revealed the tenacity of the Party bureaucracy. At the Congress (convened in May 1989) Gorbachev arranged for the creation of a new, powerful Presidency to which he himself was subsequently elected by the Supreme Soviet.[2] By investing real power in the office of President of the Supreme Soviet, instead of in the position of General Secretary of the CPSU, Gorbachev transferred his base of power from the Party to the state. Regardless of his political maneuvers, the material situation in the USSR continued to decline[3] and ethnic unrest in Transcaucasia proved unstoppable. Continued *glasnost* allowed for

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[1] Zhou, p.199.

[2] It should be noted that this was not then an election by the people, but rather by those nominated to the Supreme Soviet by the Congress of Deputies elected in early 1989.

[3] As deputy editor Viktor Loshak would note the frank report on the State Plan and Budget for 1990 showed only "the full extent of our downward slide." MN, No.38 (Sun. Sept.17, 1989) p.3.

the expression of deep dissatisfaction with the Party and with the one-party system, and in March 1990 the Congress of People's deputies ended the CPSU's monopoly on political power by removing Article 6 from the Constitution.[4] Even this reform was not sufficient. In 1990, with the Baltic states clamouring for their independence and Boris Yeltsin agitating for Russian autonomy, Gorbachev began to move closer to the conservatives in the CPSU. He strengthened the Presidency and ultimately, in September, was granted emergency powers by the Supreme Soviet. The reactionary tone of the 28th Congress in July proved the breaking point for many 'liberal' Communists; A. Yakovlev and E. Shevardnadze were the most prominent members to relinquish their Party cards in protest. As 1991 approached, MN resonated with the growing fear that a military coup would extinguish the first signs of nascent democracy.

MN in 1988, though harshly criticized by conservatives for focusing too intently on exposing the abuses of the Stalin decades, had retained a deep respect for Lenin and continued to emphasize the connection between Leninism and Gorbachev's agenda. The paper was unswervingly dedicated to the policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika,* as well as the belief that further democratization was the only real guarantee of the reforms (particularly in view of growing conservatism). The close connection between the liberals in the Politburo and MN's editor, Yegor Yakovlev, was undeniable. It was evident in the general tone of the paper and it was testified to by at least one of Yakovlev's deputy editors, Vitaly Tretyakov, who noted: "I began to

[4] Article 6 guaranteed the leading role of the CPSU as the only legitimate representative of the people's interests.

see how many visitors and calls there were from the Central Committee and it was obvious the paper was not operating independently."[5] By 1989, MN was no longer the most radical newspaper in the realm - it would not, in fact, speak out directly against Gorbachev until 1991. Nonetheless, MN in a sense embodied *glasnost* at this point. It had begun as an orchestrated campaign, a policy with limits, but the inner logic of *glasnost,* its dedication to the truth and to allowing the free expression of ideas would not allow it to simply stop at those borders. MN in 1989 and 1990 was obviously trying to fight two battles - one against the reactionaries determined to squelch its very voice and a second against radicals bent on destroying the system which had created it. The result of this situation was a sort of schizophrenia on the pages of MN in 1989 and 1990 as it struggled to be both honest and a loyal servant. Generally, honesty won.

By the end of 1988 it was becoming apparent that political reform and democratization were becoming a reality in the Soviet Union. Changes to the Constitution had been made and nation-wide multi-candidate elections had been scheduled for the upcoming spring, and *Moscow News* reported that for the first time, on October 28, 1988, some deputies in the Supreme Soviet had actually voted against a decree of the Presidium ("No one seemed to remember a single instance when someone raised a hand.")[6] It was the "end of unanimity" and when it happened a second time, MN could confidently declare that the Soviet political system was "beginning to function democratically."[7] In many respects, the USSR in 1989 was

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[5] Quoted in Remnick, p.377.
[6] MN, No.45 (Nov.13-20, 1988) p.4.
[7] MN, No.50 (Dec. 18-25, 1988) p.3.

already radically different from the USSR of 1985. As Vitaly Tretyakov avowed, those who were "almost slaves four years ago" were "almost free people today." *Perestroika* had given the Soviet people a new vocabulary and a renewed voice.[8] But there was little celebration. Despite the "inebriating freedom of speech" and the "*glasnost* galore" evident at the first Congress of Deputies - the Supreme Soviet which it elected proved to be rather conservative. The radicals, although vocal, were simply outnumbered.[9] Increasingly, it was becoming apparent that the monopoly of political power by the CPSU had become a brake on reform - the Party, Y. Yakovlev asserted was "lagging behind."[10] Sensing its loss in authority and prestige, the CPSU sought to censure the mass media and unofficial organizations. Len Karpinsky discerned in these months that the conservatives ("All The Grey Men") were consolidating: "The facts show that if resistance to *perestroika* was initially spontaneous and disorganized, now the bureaucracy has switched to well-thought out, organized activities."[11] In late 1989 Tretyakov and Karpinsky would use the pages of *Moscow News* to protest the entrenched conservatism in the CPSU. In a frank piece entitled "Gorbachev's Enigma", Tretyakov traced the progression of *perestroika*. *Glasnost* which had originally been "a question of additional information needed to achieve better acceleration" had evolved: "Step by step this *glasnost* started approaching our old Soviet taboos... socialism, a multi-party system, the October Revolution, Lenin, the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the Baltics in 1940, the events in 1956 in Hungary and of

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[8] MN, No.21 (Sun. May 21, 1989) p.1.
[9] MN, No.24 (Sun. June 11, 1989) pp.3, 7; No.26 (Sun. June 25, 1989) p.8.
[10] MN, No.36 (Sun. Sept.3, 1989) p.5.
[11] MN, No.43 (Sun. Oct.22, 1989) pp.8-9.

1968 in Czechoslovakia...." Tretyakov would continue his analysis for two pages. In the next issue Karpinsky would affirm that the CPSU had never been a real 'party,' that it had alienated the working people from "property and power" and alienated rank-and-file Communists from policy making.[12] MN had irrevocably crossed the line.

As well, it was increasingly obvious that all was not well with the Union - in 1988, continuing violence in Transcaucasia and growing radicalism in the Baltics had driven the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet into an emergency session. MN's coverage of the nationalities question had been gradually evolving since 1985.

The nature of media coverage of the nationalities question is definitely one of the most revealing of the true extent and intent of *glasnost* since it was an issue fundamentally tied to the validity of the Soviet state as the rightful government of all the disparate ethnic groups. A certain perspective of history was an essential component in depicting the USSR as a voluntary and beneficial union of nationalities. MN's coverage largely conformed to this mythology and was, particularly in 1985 and 1986, unfailingly paternalistic in tone. The Soviet account of the annexation of the western regions of Belarus and Ukraine is extremely revealing of the Soviet conception of reality. According to Soviet sources on September 17, 1939, after the Polish state had ceased to exist, the Red Army "started the march of liberation" which led to the territories of Western Byelorussia and Ukraine being "reunited" with the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR in accord with "the will of the liberated

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[12] MN, No.48 (Sun. Nov. 26, 1989) p.8; No.49 (Sun. Dec.3, 1989) p.3.

population."[13] Articles on Uzbekistan, Lithuania, and Kirghizia stressed the benefits that socialism had brought during the years of Soviet rule.[14]

By 1987, the national media was virtually obligated to report rising ethnic tensions, but did so in a qualified manner. Riots in Alma-Ata in late 1986, for example, were attributed to "hooligans" and "misguided youth."[15] Interethnic tension was rationalized as remnants of pre-socialist culture, before "the Russian people's selfless and fraternal help" allowed the "once backward national minorities" to "bypass" epochs of their development.[16] Alma-Ata was dismissed as an isolated event; the MN columnist wrote, "I understand that [our traditional internationalism] hasn't been shaken and it never will be."[17] Nationalist rumblings in the Baltics were attributed to Western provocations which ignored the fact that the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians had "chosen the road of socialism themselves."[18] Problems in Kirghizia were attributed to the lingering effects of corruption as well as the "seeds of discord" having been sown in the "immature minds" of a republic that in the "not so distant past... was a backward country populated by semi-nomadic tribes."[19] MN also continued to enunciate the official Soviet view on the Ukrainian Uniate Church, asserting that the leaders of that Church had "abetted the oppression of the Ukrainian people" and cooperated with the Nazis.[20] Armenia, it was argued, had its

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[13] MN, No. 19 (May 19 - 26, 1985) Suppl. p.4.

[14] MN, No. 12 (Mar. 31 - Apr.7, 1985) p. 9; No. 26 (Jul.7 - 14, 1985) p.12; No.21(Jun.1 - 8, 1986) Supplement.

[15] MN, No.1 (Jan. 11-18, 1987) p.3; No.4 (Sun. Jan. 25, 1987) p.10.

[16] MN, No. 8 (March 1-8, 1987) p.2; No.22 (June 7-14, 1987) p. 13

[17] MN, No.26 (July 5-12, 1987) p.8.

[18] MN, No.26 (July 5-12, 1987) p.8; No.29 (July 26 - Aug.2, 1987) p.6; No.35 (Sept. 6-13, 1987) p.10; No.6 (Feb. 14-21, 1988) p.5.

[19] MN, No. 29 (July 26 - Aug.2, 1987), supplement, p.7.

[20] MN, No.47 (Nov. 29 - Dec.6, 1987) p.5.

independence restored by the Red Army in 1920.[21] Writings in *Moscow News* from 1985 through 1987 were, thus, consistent in their support of the framework which viewed the USSR as a just, natural and voluntary political arrangement which undoubtedly benefited its composite nationalities.

In February 1988, however, ethnic tension reached a new level with the outbreak of violence in the Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAR) in the Azerbaijan SSR. The regional Soviet of the NKAR had voted to become part of Armenia sparking riots in the city of Sumgait. The five paragraphs devoted to the conflict by *Pravda* and *Izvestia* explained that, "As a result of irresponsible appeals by certain extremist-minded individuals, violations of public order were provoked." The republican Communist Parties had been instructed to "normalize the situation... ensure public order and... socialist legality."[22] MN's report, written by Yegor Yakovlev himself, echoed this official line, mentioning the "provocative violations of the public order" and the situation being "brought back to normal." The blame for violence in Sumgait was laid upon "criminal" and "hooligan" elements. Yakovlev did, however, offer some analysis, declaring that it was necessary to reexamine the nationalities policy which had obviously been as deeply affected by the "vices of the stagnation period" as other aspects of Soviet society.[23] The conflict which developed between Armenia and Azerbaijan , which would persist for several years, exemplified Gorbachev's lack of an effective nationalities policy. Even the dispatch of Interior

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[21] MN, No.4 (Jan.31 - Feb.7, 1988) p.16.
[22] *Pravda* (Feb.24,1988) p.2; *Izvestia* p.3; Translated in the CDSP, Vol.40, No.8, p.1.
[23] MN, No.11 (March 20-27, 1988) p.4

troops would do little to quell the conflict which would ultimately lead to a blockade of Armenia by the Azerbaijanis.

MN's coverage of the conflict, although initially timid, would prove to be fairly comprehensive, and would eventually loose the vocabulary of "hooliganism" and "provocation." In April 1988, a page devoted to the dispute would show a diversity of opinions. While the main article criticized the deficiencies in Soviet press coverage, the second cautioned that Western reports were also "far from unbiased" and were actually an extension of imperialist policy by those who would "like to see the Soviet Union riven by internal dissent and internecine struggle." A third article consisted of an open letter to Mikhail Gorbachev from Andrei Sakharov appealing to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet to reconsider its decision regarding the NKAR.[24] The significance of *Moscow News'* publication of a letter written by Sakharov should not be underestimated. In late 1990, a MN correspondent, G. Zhavoronkov, would detail the inside story behind this event and wrote that despite the famous phone call allowing Sakharov to return to Moscow "there was still a feeling that everything that had to do with Sakharov was banned." The letter of March 1988, which also dealt with the issue of the Crimean Tatars, was censored (remarkably) only of one paragraph pertaining to the history of the Karabakh conflict. Its publication marked the first time that a Soviet paper printed the scientist's view on an issue before they were circulated in the West.[25] Following this display of *glasnost*, MN offered an assortment of pieces which traced out the violence through 1988 including the

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[24] MN, No.13 (April 3-10, 1988) p.4.
[25] MN, No.49 (Dec. 16-23, 1991) p.16.

resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet that found it "impossible to alter the boundaries and the constitutionally established national-territorial structure of the Azerbaijan SSR and the Armenian SSR."[26] In November, MN even criticized the militia for doing "nothing" to stop the rioting in Sumgait.[27]

In 1989, MN's reporting of the nationalities question (although undoubtedly lagging behind the Republican press) was thorough and critical. While in 1987 MN could only deem the resettlement of the Crimean Tatars "unfair," by 1989 it called for some resolution of their plight acknowledging that as many as 40 000 Tatars had died during resettlement. It also dismissed years of propaganda against the Tatars as "absurd" and asked "Whence this obsession in Stalin to recarve the country's ethnic map, to displace, the Koreans, Germans, Tatars, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingushes, Karachais and Balkars?"[28]

In April 1989, reports of violence in Tbilisi, Georgia appeared in the Soviet press. The first reports in MN were vague. It was known that on April 4 an unauthorized demonstration had been dispersed by troops and the militia - in typical fashion MN's first explanation implicated Georgian separatists. On the 23rd, however, MN reported that although calls for Georgia's secession had incited the leadership to use force the question remained, 'Who was guilty?' The paper demanded that the circumstances of the clash (16 people had been killed) be revealed and supported "Georgia's rightful indignation over the lack of information... and the attempts to hush

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[26] MN, No.30(Sun. July 24, 1988) p.1. Some other major articles: MN, No.16 (April 24 - May 1, 1988)pp.1, 13; No.21 (May 29 - June 5, 1988) p.1, 4; No.25 (June 26-July 3, 1988) p.4; No.26 (July 3-10, 1988) p.11; No.29 (Sun. July 17, 1988) p.4; No.33 (Aug. 23-30, 1988) p.3.

[27] MN, No.44 (Nov. 8-15, 1988) p.14.

[28] MN, No.31 (Aug. 9-16, 1988) p.3; No.15 (Sun. April 9, 1989) p.13.

up what happened." In fact, despite valiant efforts by the Republican leadership, it was impossible to 'hush up' the events in Tbilisi. Several People's Deputies went to Tbilisi to investigate the matter. Yegor Yakovlev wrote a lengthy article criticizing the decision to attempt to "switch off" *glasnost*. Official reports had stated that the troops dispatched had never fired their weapons and yet "everyone knows... a young man was shot through his temple." Although the demonstration had been 'extremist' the decision to resort to violence and then to attempt to deny it was intolerable to Yakovlev: "[W]hat happened in Tbilisi was... a vision of the way *perestroika* can be cut short. The absence of precise legal norms in emergencies opens up limitless opportunities for arbitrary, uncontrollable decisions with unpredictable consequences."[29] Ultimately, MN would follow the investigation of a Supreme Soviet commission concluding that although the demonstration had disrupted public order it was not a threat to the Soviet regime and that, therefore, the decision to use the Soviet army was "an unlawful act."[30]

Unrest and ethnic clashes persisted through out 1989 in Georgia, Moldavia, Central Asia and, of course, the Nagorno Karabakh, but the ultimate crisis of the Soviet state would arise in the Baltics in 1990. On March 11, 1990 the Republic of Lithuania, having declared the 1940 annexation of Lithuania invalid, announced its independence from the USSR. MN's coverage of the crisis in the Baltics was unremarkable. Yuri Bandera made a valiant effort to understand Lithuania's actions even noting that "our amazing federal constitution enabled Lithuania to take advantage

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[29] MN, No.16 (Sun. April 16, 1989) p.2; No.17 (Sun. April 23, 1989) pp.1,4,5.

[30] MN, No.21 (Sun. May21, 1989) p.13; No.26 (Sun. June 25, 1989) p.2; No.32 (Sun. Aug.6, 1989) p.2.

of this right." However, one can not ignore Bandera's lingering doubt that the announcement of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet was really representative of the majority.[31] Generally, however, the Baltic crisis received only a cursory and cautious treatment on the pages of *Moscow News*.[32]

The crisis in *perestroika* was, nevertheless, painfully apparent in MN's political coverage: "We feel that *perestroika* has come up against an invisible wall in recent months."[33] MN gave wide publicity to the necessity of reforming the Communist Party, and of eliminating Article Six of the Constitution which guaranteed the CPSU's "leading role." The revision of Article Six in the CPSU Central Committee's Platform for the 28th Party Congress were hailed by long-time MN commentator, Dmitry Kazutin, as a "*de jure* recognition of what already exists *de facto* in our country, i.e. political pluralism and a multi-party system."[34] As the 28th Party Congress approached, MN printed several articles debating the benefits and detriments of the system of strong Presidential rule, which Gorbachev seemed to be advocating, and the need to reform the Party from within. Alexander Yakovlev, himself, wrote a piece which offered a note of caution against an overly powerful executive and posed the rhetorical question to his audience: "Will you want to swap the burden of freedom, the burden of responsibility for the powerful 'paternal' hand of a 'strong president'?"[35]

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[31] MN, No.14 (Sun April 8, 1990) p.4.

[32] Ironically, MN had criticized its own coverage of the roots of the crisis in 1988 calling the reporting in the central press "feeble" and its own effort "undistinguished." MN, No.48 (Dec. 4-11, 1988) p.15. This might suggest that MN's scanty coverage in 1990 reflected not a lack of awareness but perhaps the effects of growing external constraints.

[33] MN, No.11 (Sun. March 18, 1990) p.7.

[34] MN, No.4 (Sun. Jan.28, 1990) p.6; No.5 (Sun. Feb.4, 1990) pp.3, 7; No.7 (Sun. Feb.18, 1990) p.6; No.13 (Sun. April 1, 1990) p.7.

[35] MN, No. 11 (Sun. March 18, 1990) p.6.

Yakovlev's statement was indicative of the growing gap between Gorbachev and the left-wing of the Party. MN, it would appear, had remained loyal to the "Democratic Platform" advertising that "the true aim of the left in the Party is democratic socialism."[36] *Perestroika*'s main problem, MN asserted, was a growing credibility crisis - the legitimacy of authority was a growing concern. Public opinion polls showed that 35% of those surveyed "totally mistrusted the CPSU."[37] In a sense, publishing statements such as these questioning the legitimacy of Party authority and opinion polls which were critical of the Party constituted a significant transformation in *Moscow News*. The depth of this change, however, was overshadowed by the growing radicalism in Soviet society as a whole. MN was middle-of-the-road. It supported and continued to propagandize the beliefs of dedicated socialists who were making their last attempts to revitalize a crumbling institution.

The 28th Congress of the Communist Party (July 2-14, 1990) marked the end of attempts to reform the Communist Party from within. As Kazutin and Karpinsky reported, the Congress offered little for the left-wing: "The party's main line is to add more power to the great power it already has. This is the root cause for the global material and cultural impoverishment of our society, of the crisis of the party which does not fit in the plan for democratic renewal."[38] MN also reprinted excerpts of A. Yakovlev's speech in which he announced his resignation from the CPSU : "Indeed,

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[36] MN, No.15 (Sun. April 15, 1990) p.7.
[37] MN, No.15 (Sun. April 15, 1990) p.7; No.21 (June 3-10, 1990) pp.8-9.
[38] MN, No. 27 (July 15-22, 1990) p.7.

socialism has not been built. What we have is departmental feudalism...."[39] In subsequent issues, Yelena Bonner (Sakharov's widow) depicted the Congress as a "banal, unscrupulous ideological drama." The CPSU, she affirmed, had already contributed enough to the country's progress. Even *perestroika* had been nothing more than "the usual long-term building programme during which building materials rotted, machine-tools rusted and money went who-knew-where."[40] In the streets of Moscow, meanwhile, democratic forces rallied on July 15 under banners which read "CPSU to the Dust Heap of History!" MN's commentator noted that it was "Perhaps for the first time, tens of thousands of people... listened to harsh criticism of Gorbachev...."[41] The issue, it would appear, was no longer reforming the system, but getting rid of it.

In September 1990, MN made a tangible break from the past. In August it had become clear that Novosti Press Agency would no longer be capable of providing MN with printing facilities or any infrastructure. Perhaps, it was believed by authorities that without material support MN would wither and die. The paper instead charted a new and independent course. Under the administration of a founding society including many notable figures, MN launched itself as an Independent Weekly. The new goal of the paper was to become a forum "of constructive dialogue open to all viewpoints."[42]

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[39] MN, No. 28 (July 22-29, 1990) p.5. Several articles describing the prevailing conservativism of the Congress also appeared in MN, No.29 (July 29 - Aug. 5, 1990) and No.30 (Aug. 5-12, 1990).

[40] MN, No. 30 (Aug. 5-12, 1990) p.5; No.33 (Aug. 26 - Sept. 2, 1990) p.9.

[41] No.29 (July 29 - Aug. 5, 1990) p.6. It is also of significance that MN dutifully reported the demands of striking miners in Donetsk who had demanded the resignation of the national government as well as the depoliticization of the KGB and of the Armed Forces. MN, No.25 (July 1-8, 1990) p.4; No. 27 (July 15-22, 1990) p.1.

[42] MN, No.35 (Sept. 9-16, 1990) p.2. Among those in the founding society were A. Gelman, Y. Ryzhov, T. Abuladze, Y. Ambartsumov, A. Bovin, D. Granin, A. Sobchak and A. Yakovlev.

The co-founders of the new *Moscow News* would also use the paper to express their own views. As the ruling circles, including Gorbachev, moved steadily to the right, MN raised its voice in protest: "our society is seriously ill, but the authorities can't or don't want to cure it. It seems as if our most urgent problem are being openly sabotaged by government officials. The nation is stubbornly slipping towards civil war." As 1990 drew to a close the liberal intelligentsia used *Moscow News* to issue their own demands to Gorbachev. They called for total *glasnost*, the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of all of the republics, the return to private property, the complete separation of Party and state authority, the radical reform of the military and the KGB and finally the creation of a government capable of effecting real economic reform.[43]

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[43] MN, No.6 (Nov.25 - Dec.2, 1990) p.1.

SUBVERSION:
THE END OF THE USSR

As 1991 began it was undeniable that *Moscow News* had been transformed. MN 1991, the Independent Weekly, bore only a slight resemblance to the propaganda "throw away" paper it had been in 1985. The CPSU, once depicted in its pages as the leading force of *perestroika* and the true representative of all the Soviet people, was now a bastion of reactionaries - out of touch with the masses. The Union itself, once hailed as the salvation of once backward and oppressed nations, had been revealed as a sham - an anachronism standing in the way of true self-determination. There were no longer taboos, no longer any names that could not be mentioned, no longer any mythology that had to be sustained. MN was no longer recognizable as an instrument of Soviet power. Instead, it was a critic and a saboteur.

The 'invasion' of Vilnius in early January, 1991 revealed the depth of MN's opposition. While certain newspapers refused to criticize the government's actions - MN roared in protest. The January 20 edition appeared edged in black and devoted eight of sixteen pages to the conflict.[44] The front page carried a statement written by MN's founding members entitled "A Crime By A Regime That Doesn't Want To Leave The Stage." Democracy, the letter stated, had been "shot down." MN could interpret the actions in Vilnius as nothing less than the beginning of a war declared on the republics: "Everything that happened in Lithuania must be assessed unambiguously as a **crime**."[45] Subsequent editions continued to object to the

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[44] Vachnadze, p.103.
[45] MN, January 20, 1991, p.1 as reprinted in CDSP Vol.43, No.3, pp.11, 19.

"murders' and to the unjustified infringement on Lithuania's sovereignty.[46] The paper also continued an unrestrained criticism of the state of life in the USSR and the revival of repressions. For example, it ran a two-page spread under the title "The Monster" which discussed the true nature of the Soviet military-industrial complex.[47] The struggle of the miners in the Kuzbass was supported with sympathetic coverage and front-page status.[48] In March, the centre pages of the paper were devoted to "A Map of Unrest in the USSR" - a series of articles and maps describing the "76 cities, towns, districts and regions where Soviet people are in mortal conflict 'on ethnic grounds'."[49] On the topic of the economy MN attacked the "ineptitude of the command system" which had thoroughly proved "that not only can it not produce goods, but it also can't get them or make them available to consumers."[50] In an increasingly repressive atmosphere, MN continued to fight for *glasnost*. Yakovlev organized a round table discussion of many of the leaders of the liberal media in March. In the face of "increased pressure" by the authorities the headlines announced ,"The free press will defend itself."[51] MN consistently maintained that more change and greater democracy were the only solution to the crisis gripping the Soviet Union.

The attempted coup by CPSU conservatives in August was, of course, ultimately the decisive moment. It proved to those still attempting to reassert the control of the Party what MN had been saying for nearly a year - it was too late.

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[46] MN, No.5 (Feb.3-10, 1991) pp. 5, 7; No.6 (Feb. 10-17, 1991) p.6; No.16 (April 21-28, 1991) p.5.
[47] MN, No.8 (Feb.24 - March 3, 1991) pp.8-9.
[48] MN, No.11 (March 17-24, 1991) p.1
[49] MN, No.11 (March 17-24, 1991) pp.8-9
[50] MN, No.13 (March 31 - April 7, 1991) p.11.
[51] MN, No.10 (March 10-17, 1991) pp.8-9.

Moscow News, not surprisingly, was among the newspapers silenced by the 'State Committee for the State of Emergency'. On September 1, a double edition (Nos. 34-35) appeared. Vasil Bykov's second page column, "Moscow Buries The Victims", encapsulated the paper's rage:

> The capital paid its last respects to national heroes - victims of the bloody tyranny.... As if suppressing our eternal... fear, they blocked the road of the Bolshevik rhinoceros and perished.
>
> Who is guilty of shedding our blood for decades and turning us into dehumanized mutants and national suicides?
>
> It is our 'beloved party'... which was permanently in the hands of rogues and degenerates.
>
> For decades we have been oppressed by violence, enslavement and totalitarian distortion of our humanity.... In complete silence and with absolute obedience to fools and criminals. Then fresh air in the name of *glasnost* began to penetrate the rusty holes of our prison cell. This enraged them and they sent out the tanks to bring us to our knees once and for all. So that scum from Staraya Ploshad... could keep us under control... without hoisting their fat bottoms out of soft armchairs....
>
> No, we were not brought to our knees, we won.[52]

Certainly, in these defiant words there was no trace of the newspaper which had once hailed the people's "unanimous support" of the CPSU.[53]

Moscow News, the "flagship of *perestroika*", had turned 60, ironically in the same year as Mikhail Gorbachev entered his 60th year. The paper which had so obviously acted as Gorbachev's publicist and stalwart supporter in the first years of his reforms had refused to follow him in his retreat from reform. MN had remained loyal not to the institutions of power but to the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. It had continued to act as the voice of the *shestidesyatniki* - the "men of the sixties" who had since the days of Khrushchev "harboured the dream of a humane socialism." They

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[52] MN, Nos. 34-35 (Sept. 1-8, 1991) p.2.
[53] MN, No.9 (Sun. March 3, 1985) p.1.

had worked in the nether region between dissidence and conformity. Many, in the eighties, were revealed as hypocrites. They were the architects of *glasnost.* In the Politburo and the Kremlin, they were embodied in Alexander Yakovlev who struggled to restructure the Party itself into an organ of democratic socialism. MN's founding committee was dominated by them, as were its pages - Dmitry Kazutin, Len Karpinsky, Aleksandr Bovin, Yegor Yakovlev. David Remnick called them simply "the *Moscow News* generation."[54]

In 1985 and 1986, MN had dutifully fulfilled a role plainly allocated to it from above. It had publicized the campaigns calling for acceleration and technical progress; it had endeavoured to reform its own economic vocabulary; it spoke out against corruption, inefficiency, and shortages. The paper campaigned unceasingly for "new political thinking" in international affairs and the critical need for disarmament and détente. In 1987 and 1988, it reported the extension of *glasnost* into the realms of culture and history. It crusaded for further democratization and linked that goal with the extension of socialism. It reconstructed history, attacking Stalin and rehabilitating the repressed. It depicted the rehabilitated Bukharin and the NEP as the true legacies of Lenin, thus reinforcing Gorbachev's campaign for greater personal responsibility and the decentralization of the economy. MN served the Gorbachev agenda, lending itself as forum of open debates - all in the name of forwarding *perestroika.*

Like the popular fronts which had their roots as pro-*perestroika* movements, however, MN's commitment to true *glasnost* gradually began to pull it away from the 'official line.' The catastrophic accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in

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[54] Remnick, pp. 61, 168, 389.

1986, exposed for many the need for greater freedom of information. In MN, it seemed to spark a more critical attitude towards not only nuclear power, but other industrial threats to the environment. Similarly, early campaigns against corruption and shortages led to the open acknowledgment of the underground (shadow) economy and organized crime, as well as a comprehensive attack on elite privileges which further undermined the legitimacy of Party rule. The rehabilitation of cultural figures led to an examination of the breadth of persecution in Soviet history as well as the recognition of dissidence and latent opposition to the regime. In 1988 and 1989 as conservative opposition grew in Soviet society at large, MN maintained that restricting *glasnost* would only endanger the future of socialism. It fought attempts to muzzle the increasingly radical press through the imposition of subscription limits.

The transformation of MN was not a linear one. Aside from the appointment of Yegor Yakovlev as editor, there was no single turning point which saw MN metamorphosize from loyal servant to intrepid saboteur. Instead the paper reflected the complexity and ambiguity of a greater transformation occurring in the lives of the Soviet people, and it reflected Yakovlev himself. Yakovlev's devotion to socialism was unswerving, and his loyalty to the Party enduring. By 1990, there were many more radical people (such as Boris Yeltsin) and papers. MN, however, still resonated with the dream of creating true socialism, and later (after Vilnius) with the bitterness of the realization that that dream would go unfulfilled. *Moscow News* was *glasnost* - a policy which grew into something that could ultimately only destroy itself.

The political dissolution of the Soviet empire in 1991 was preceded by a period of monumental change. Among the institutions of Soviet power transformed during the Gorbachev era, the press was transfigured from a pliable servant of the authorities into an unshackled voice of the people. The increasingly free discussion of ideas in the Soviet Union had allowed for a remarkable and relatively rapid change in the terms of public discourse. Topics which were previously outside of the realm of debate - the "givens" of Soviet life, such as the veracity of Leninism, the supremacy of the CPSU and the inviolability of the Union - were suddenly disputable. Although some may argue that the collapse of the USSR was caused primarily by economic collapse, the questioning of these fundamental tenets of Soviet life was an essential precondition for the disintegration of the Soviet Union. By December of 1991, an empire had collapsed - destroyed not by force, but by words and ideas.

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